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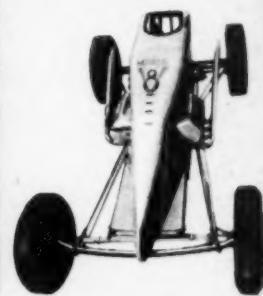
# ROD & *Custom*

COMBINED WITH HOP UP

JUNE, 1954

25c

PAGE 34



**HOP UP  
ROAD TEST**

**BIGGEST DRAG  
MEET OF '54**



**COVER ROADSTER  
PAGE 8**

# NEW! GIANT 1954 CATALOG OF **Automotive Parts and Accessories**

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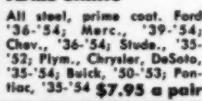
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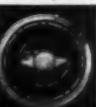
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# ROD & Custom

Volume 2, No. 2

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- Photography

June, 1954

- W. S. Quinn
- Spencer Murray
- Louis Kimzey
- Ray Rich
- Barney Navarro
- Marvin Patchen
- Ralph Poole

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# editorial

NO DOUBT you have read road tests of stock automobiles in any one of the several publications that choose to carry this sort of feature. However, many of you may have wondered how a Rod would stand up during the rigorous testing of a qualified yet unbiased driver. Beginning with this issue R & C is happy to be able to bring you the first in a series of such tests. Staff drivers recently took a clean little street Rod out to a desert testing site and put the car through its paces. We checked gasoline consumption under many conditions, we checked handling over mountainous roads and on flat straight-aways, the car was run through a quarter mile drag strip and the results duly recorded. All in all the car stood up extremely well — a credit to its builder — and the complete story of R & C's first Hop Up Road Test begins on page 12. It should be pointed out, though, that the car was not intended to provide its driver with earth-shaking acceleration or an unheard of top speed. Rather, it was conceived and constructed to provide daily, reliable transportation around town. It was selected as our first test car so the reader may form a basis for comparison as we gradually work our way up into things much hotter.

\* \* \* \*

Ever wonder how it would feel to suddenly be transplanted to a far distant spot without being forewarned? R & C recently experienced such a thing — February to be exact. Without previous notice we were put on a plane bound for Michigan. To warm-weather-loving Californians this came as quite a blow but we managed to survive the incident with nothing more than a slight case of frostbite. One of the reasons behind this trip was to check on the doings of the Mid-Western and Southern enthusiasts. Being in the dead of winter we found most of the Rod and Custom lovers in the midst of constructing, modifying or rebuilding. The tour took us from Detroit to Toledo, Indianapolis, Dayton, Chattanooga, Memphis, Dallas, El Paso then back to Los Angeles. We were able to gather quite a bit of interesting material for this and forthcoming issues — one example of which

(Continued on Page 59)

## ABOUT THE COVER

Our cover this month is graced by Erwin Drake's fine little '33 roadster. Erwin reports that the paint is American LaFrance Red — in case you didn't know that's the shade popularly used on fire engines. Photographer Poole did the trick with his 4" x 5" Speed Graphic using Ektachrome. The car opens the issue on page 8.

ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954

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# Correspondence

## SUSCRIPCIONES INTERNACIONALES

El motivo de ésta es para mularles una pregunta, si se editan ejemplares de la revista ROD & CUSTOM en idioma Castellano.

Si así fuera, les ruego quieran escribirme, indicandomé como puedo suscribirme y si se acepta moneda Argentina.

En espera de vuestra atención, saluda muy atenta.

Roberto Falsetti

Santa Fe, Argentine

• *Sentimos mucho informar le que nuestra revista R & C, es publicada solamente en inglés. Si a pesar de esto usted todavía peseare subscribirse, muy atentamente le informamos que aceptamos letras de cambio internacionales.*

Ha sido para nosotros un gusto poder servirles y esperamos muy atentamente su respuesta.

## CUSTOMIZED BUICK?

I would like to extend my congratulations to your truly fine magazine. I have been reading it for some time and think it is really the best!

While reading through the March issue I noticed Don Mann's "Reader's Custom" Pontiac. You stated that this make of car is seldom customized. This also seems to be true of Buicks. Since I hold the '49 Buick in high esteem I am wondering if there is some reason for this car not being widely popular as customizing material.

Paul Vierling

St. Paul, Minn.

• *Buicks and Pontiacs are not generally customized but when they are, the result is usually quite gratifying. Both cars have good inherent design and there is no reason why enthusiasts do not take to them as they do to Fords, Chevys and Mercs. As for a suggestion, go ahead on your Buick and with a little care and forethought you should be able to come up with a fine looking custom.*

## CLUB PLATES

Your pocket size magazine is the greatest ever! Keep up the fine work. I really go for your articles on Rods and Customs, but don't go crazy and start putting those foreign cars in it. We're American, let's keep our cars, and your magazine, that way!!

6

I'm attending General Motors Institute and belong to the "Motor Sports Club" there. We're designing our own club plates but we're having trouble finding a place to mount them on our cars. Being from Indiana I have two license plates and this really spoils the idea of mounting a club plate in front. If any of your readers have an idea for mounting a third plate so that it doesn't make the car look like a gook wagon, let's have it.

Gene Smith 1825 Monteith, Flint, Mich.

## PROFESSIONAL HATER

I like your magazine very much, it's great! There's one thing, though, that I dislike and I feel sure that many readers will agree. I can't stand those professional-built Kustoms that weasel into your pages every once in a while. My idea of a true custom is a car that was restyled or modified by the owner to suit his own personal taste — regardless of what others may think of his design. One such car was a '40 Ford coupe reworked by Frank Herendeen and covered in your January issue. How about more of these fine home-built customs and fewer shop-built cars?

Larry Boyle Minneapolis, Minnesota

## A LETTER FROM KAISERSLAUTERN

I have been an ardent reader of your great little magazine since its beginning. Believe me, it is topped by none. Here in Germany magazines such as yours are the only bond an enthusiast has with his hobby.

I will be discharged shortly and can hardly wait to get home (Columbus, Ohio) to Ole Faithful. (That's what I call my '48 Merc coupe.) As soon as I can, I'm going to chop the top, fill all the chrome trim holes, remove the door handles, lower it, etc. I hope it turns out to be a real eye-catcher.

Thanks again for the great magazines.  
Cpl. A. G. Wingo Kaiserslautern, Germany

• *You forgot one thing: when you're finished with your car send a photo of it to Reader's Customs.*

## STILL HASSLING

I have been buying R & C since it came out in May of 1953. I think it's a fine magazine and I find myself referring to it often.

ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954

Why doesn't someone tell these guys that are always complaining that there aren't enough Customs or that there are not enough Rods, or vice versa, to put up or shut up!

Enclosed please find \$3.00 for a year's subscription.

Jack Anderson Silverdale, Wash.

- Chalk up another cash customer.

#### WASTE OF TIME?

Writing this letter is, no doubt, a complete waste of time for two reasons. The first being that this will, in all probability, not be published. Second, I doubt if it will get into the hands of the employee of R & C who wrote the reply to Bob Arnold's letter which appeared in the Correspondence section of the March issue. The heading given his letter was ". . . AND CON". Bob definitely made both the Eastern police and the Eastern rodgers look like fools.

In our section of the country weather is our main enemy and also, not like California, the speed shops are few and far between but we make the best of what we have. Unlike Bob, if we want any custom work done there is no such thing as wheeling our car into a Custom shop like 9 out of 10 Californians do. We take pride in being able to say, "I built it myself". That's more than many Californians can say.

Your answer to Bob sort of gave the impression that the East was made up of nothing but squirrels. I have a very strong suspicion that if you compare the East with the West you will find the same number of squirrels in each section of the country.

I had to blow off steam to you before I blew up myself. We're getting sick of the "Tin Kings" on wheels from California.

Bill Black Dedham, Mass.

• "Tin Kings", Hmmmm. Any Lead Sled owners or Kalifornia Kustom lovers want to argue it out with the East? We'll stay on the fence in this hassle and do nothing more than let the Correspondence column air whatever views we might get.

#### INDIANAPOLIS

I would like to obtain some information about reserve tickets to the coming Indianapolis 500 Mile Race. Could you tell me the address of the Speedway?

Rick Widdop Philadelphia, Pa.

• Information, and tickets, can be had by writing to Indianapolis Motor Speedway Corporation, 729 Capital Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana.

ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954

# 100 cars!



Yes, in only 14 issues, ROD & CUSTOM has featured 100 cars. YOU CAN'T BEAT COVERAGE LIKE THAT IN ANY AUTOMOTIVE MAGAZINE. In addition there have been 75 timely and important articles on customizing and engine modifying. This plus the regularly run How-to-do-it's, Accessory Installations and tips ranging from the building of dash knobs to a behind-the-scenes glance at an auto show make ROD & CUSTOM the outstanding magazine in its field. The next 12 months will include even more of the things you want to see than did those just passed.

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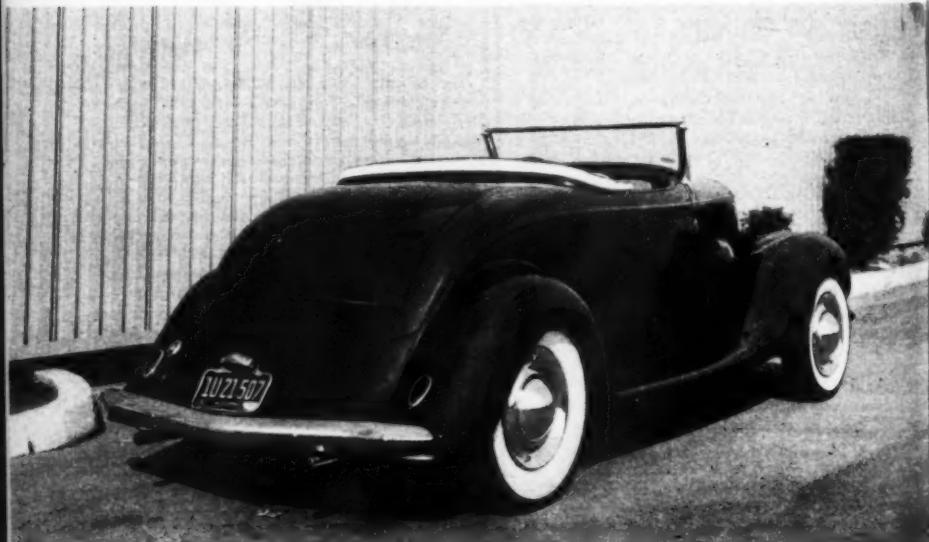
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Photos by Ralph Peale

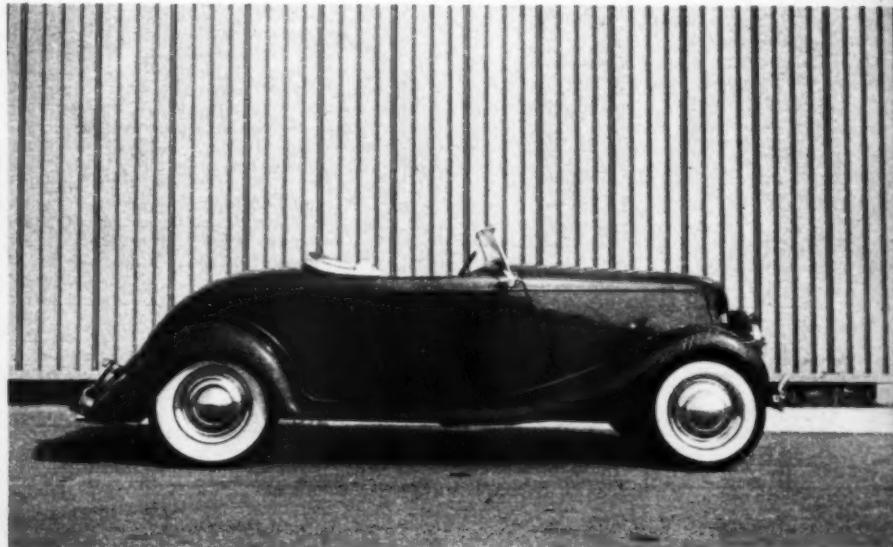
Added body panel between fenders changes otherwise familiar appearance of the Ford roadster. '38 Ford taillights are protected by Studebaker bumper from motorists who like to follow too close for comfort. The bright red lacquer job, as indicated on our cover, covers smooth body.



# **SENSIBLE, SATISFYING AND SOLID**

**Seldom seen '33 Ford features swing-up hood  
and triangle-studded interior.**

The car presents a striking appearance when it is viewed from any angle. White sidewall tires and combination red and white upholstery set off the paint job. Running boards are frenched.

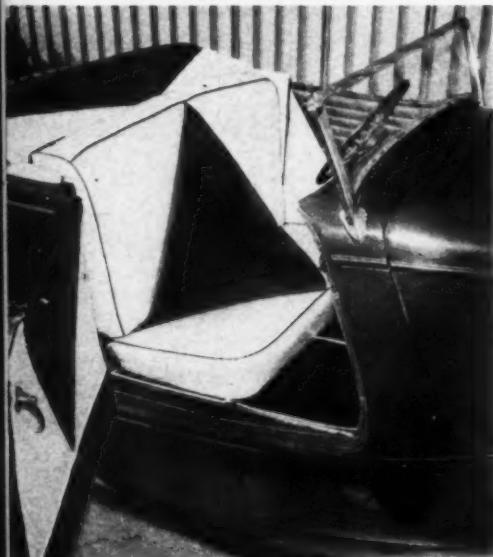


**W**HEN Erwin Drake first saw this Ford roadster he immediately fell in love with it and began dickering with the owner over a price satisfactory to both of them. To make a long story short, Erwin ended up with the little jewel and, in spite of the fine work already done on the car, began making plans for such additional alterations as he felt the car deserved.

There is a marked difference between one who builds cars and one who buys them already built. This, however, is the exception that proves the rule. Erwin had long visualized a car such as this but his job at the Ideal Toy Corporation in Los Angeles took up a good part of his time and his wife and two children consumed what spare time he could find. Building a car, then, was out of the question so he looked hard and long before he unearthed this fine '33 roadster.

As soon as the car was his, Erwin began working it over from stem to stern — as time would allow. Little could be done to actually improve upon the car's appearance or upon the fine workmanship incorporated into the changes, so he contented himself with replating much of the hardware, repainting the car fire engine red and tuning up the engine.

**G**aylord Kustom upholstery is pleated and rolled leatherette with a rather unusual design pattern. Interior is protected by a white canvas top, at home when photos were made. Lack of roll up type windows make door opening easy with inside knobs. Windshield height has been reduced considerably.



10

Speaking of engines, Erwin plans to install either an Oldsmobile or Cadillac V8 as soon as his rather limited time will permit.

The car was born as one of reasonably few '33 roadsters. This model was not produced in such quantities as had the '32 or the immediately following '34. The body is much the same as the '34, but certain refinements were incorporated into the later model using the '33 as a basis for the changes. Rather than give the car the treatment, as it were, and make it an out and out rod, this car was customized, to use the word loosely. Such alterations included the addition of a hand-formed grille and surrounding shell, the alligator-type hood that opens from the front like its later model counterparts and the frenching of '40 Chevrolet headlights onto the bobbed fenders.

The cockpit is truly a thing of beauty. Facing the driver is an array of '39 Ford instruments, a Stewart Warner tachometer and the original floor shift lever which serves to limit the seat to two people as was originally intended. Gaylord was responsible for the upholstery, one of the additions made by the new owner. The seats, door and kick panels are covered with red and white, pleated and rolled leatherette while the carpeting is a dark maroon with white foot pads.

All of the unnecessary exterior ornamentation was removed and the holes filled. The removing treatment took care of the doorhandles, the trunk handle, the cowl and the rear lower body panel. The stock running boards were exchanged for a pair made of steel which were welded and frenched to both the front and rear fenders.

The rear Studebaker bumper protects the low slung car from damage. '38 Ford taillights serve as warning to closely following, unappreciative motorists.

A '46 59A engine block replaces the tired '33 mill that had long since outlived its usefulness. The newer mill has been ported and relieved, bored and stroked and boasts a wide array of equipment such as an Offenhauser dual manifold mounting a pair of Stromberg '48s, a Zimmer 5-T cam, 'chopped' flywheel and dual point ignition system.

Chassis revisions included the replacement of the mechanical brakes with a set of hydraulics from a retired '41 Ford, a set of 16", '40 Ford wheels and tubular 50-50 shocks. Front tires are 6.00 x 16" and those that deliver the power to the road are 7.50 x 16" s.

Needless to say, the bright red rod stands alone whether it be in its home town of Huntington Park, Calif., in downtown Los Angeles or on the Sunset Strip in the Hollywood area. Even without the addition of the late ohv engine or the reworked dash, which is also in the offing, the car is up to date in all respects and should provide its very proud owner with years of satisfaction.

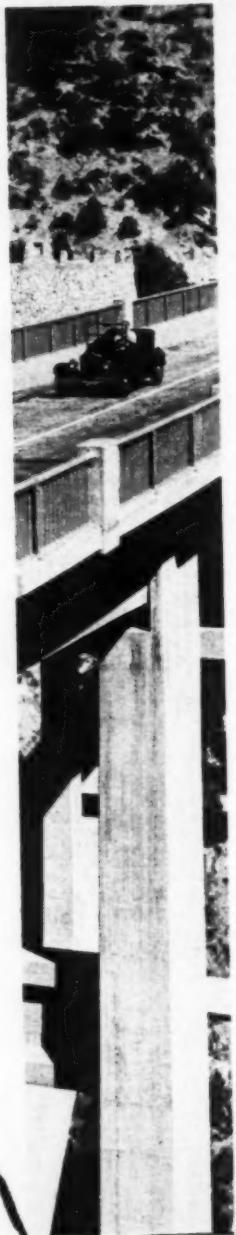
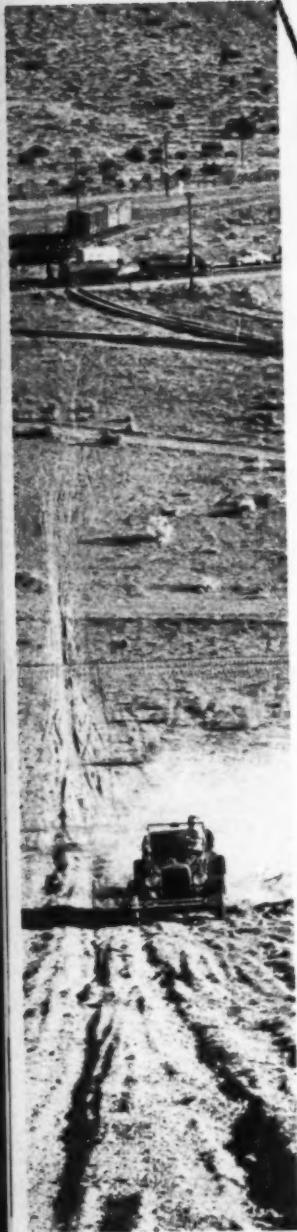
ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954



Alligator-type hood opens from the front and reveals a mildly reworked '46 V8 engine with full compliment of added accessories. Estimated top speed is 110, car has never been clocked.

'40 Chevy headlights, frenched to fenders, set off handbuilt grille shell. The one piece hood serves to hide true identity of the '33 roadster. Front bumper, like the rear, is from Studebaker. Future changes include restyling dash which here has '39 Ford instruments set into '33 panel. Steering wheel is also '39. The maroon carpet and white pads discourage dirty feet.





# HOP UP ROAD TEST

"Second Childhood" T is put through its paces.

By Lynn Winsland



FOLKS DRIVING through Burbank, California, in their examples of Detroit's more recent efforts are at first apt to smile complacently or even laugh outright at one of the Motor City's earlier products which is pacing them along the boulevard. A deceptively innocent Model T touring car glides beside them without the usual clatter attributed to the breed and despite the best efforts of many horses straining under the hood of the chrome-decked auto, the little Ford is out in front. The smiles fade for obviously this machine is enjoying its second childhood. The only readily discernible outward change in the car is the use of small disc wheels mounting 5.50 x 15" tires in front and 6.00 x 16" at the rear. The black enamel paint and the black leather upholstery were no deviation from the original and rechroming the Ford bumpers, grille shell, headlight rims, taillight and radiator cap continues to convey a just-off-the-assembly-line appearance.

Careful scrutinizing by a trained eye will reveal a different steering wheel than the usual model was equipped with and the lack of the spark and throttle levers. The throttle is now a pedal on the floor alongside the more conventional clutch and brake actuators. The dashboard contains the usual components with the addition of a speedometer, oil pressure gauge and temperature gauge. A former high-beam warning light signals the operation of the electric fuel pump and its switch is located on the support below the front seat.

Of the undercarriage only the springing was left unchanged, although later Ford components are used throughout. The 1940 spindles and brakes mount to a '32 axle and radius rod assembly. The rear end is a 3.54 to 1 ratio from a '40 Mercury which has had

perches attached to accommodate the T-type spring. Rear wheel emergency brakes are controlled by a 1949 Ford handle mounted just below the stock T gas tank which, as you all know, is beneath the cowl.

The 1938 transmission case contains Lincoln Zephyr gears and the engine is a 221 inch '37 V8 model with a bit of modernizing. Changes to the power plant include .125" overbore (bringing displacement up to 239 inches), .080" removed from the heads, porting and relieving of the block, valve seats cut to a 30 degree angle, adjustable tappets, aluminum pistons, a '41 intake manifold and exhaust headers. The flywheel was chopped and mounts an Auburn clutch. To adequately cool the new engine the Model T radiator tanks were adapted to a 3½ inch Buick core which has the capacity needed for around town driving. Other changes were the Delco shocks and the use of a '37 Willys steering unit. Safety glass is used in the stock height windshield.

Who is the man behind the wheel of this attention-getter? What was his reason for constructing this machine? Thirty-five year old Bud Mounsey, the owner of Bud's Auto Service at 1700 N. San Fernando Road in Burbank, is no stranger to hop up procedure as his shop usually contains one or more cars undergoing "the treatment".

For several years the company runabout was a completely stock '27 T touring. When the tired, faithful old four barrel coughed its last, Bud set out in search of another T engine. The scarcity of such items and the urging of the other mechanics in the shop prompted the idea of a V8 conversion. The necessary parts were procured and after three



Visibility was excellent, needless to say! All four corners were within easy view of driver.

and a half weeks of evening work the tub was rolled out for its trial run. The new sound as the T-bone cruised effortlessly down the road was a mellow tune of power from the dual exhaust and header system. In the process of construction a muffler by-pass was incorporated with a set of removable plugs.

When ROD & CUSTOM requested the use of the car the response was eager and affirmative. It was decided to present the readers with a road test in the best of R & C manner.

Entering the car from the left door and under the steering wheel made it immediately obvious that this was no machine for a fat boy road tester. Not having a faithful dog, a staunch friend was taken for ballast and moral support. Once in the car, it was found to be quite comfortable. What with no top, visibility was found to be excellent and the driver is easily able to see all four corners of the T. Backing, from the garage and around an obstructing car, was smooth and positive with no tendency to shudder, and the quick steering made navigation effortless.

The clutch and brake pedals had good "feel" despite the step-down method of operation and throttle response was immediate. Acceleration in low gear was positive and continuous clear up to 55 mph, although 60 mph was possible without undue strain. Top speed was somewhat lacking since a good part of

the frontal area was made up with the vertical, high windshield, though it should be pointed out that this is no car for racing — it is merely a cleaned-up, reliable piece of every-day transportation.

Heading northward from the busy Los Angeles area we climbed to 4000 feet elevation on the winding and twisting Angeles Crest Highway. Many a late model car was overtaken on the few long straightaways — many of them laboring up the grades in second gear or with their automatic transmissions down in passing gear. Needless to say, high gear in the T was all that was necessary to negotiate the inclines of this famed road.

Once out on the California desert where the temperature rose into the eighties we expected a little overheating but there was not so much as a gurgle from the radiator and the engine remained cool enough to be touched without having our fingers burned.

We criss-crossed the desert over cement, asphalt, gravel, dirt and very dusty roads. The T was even subjected to a bit of no road for a while. The car was amazingly free of rattles and squeaks and except for the wind whistling past our heads, we might have considered ourselves as being in a heavily under-sealed, well-insulated sedan. The exhaust pipes spoke softly and the engine was scarcely audible.

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The quickened steering, though a little stiff to operate when parking, made handling a dream and several attempts to spin the car out on paved roads resulted in nothing more than a slight squeal of rubber. The car stuck to the road like glue. A spin out was only possible on a dirt road and even then the car came around perfectly flat and the driver had complete control at all times. Though dust and dirt flew in all directions during stopping tests on secondary roads, little of it sifted through the floor boards or around the doors. It merely came over the top of the body.

Night driving proved that all of the electrical lighting equipment was in first-class shape and neither the headlights or taillight vibrated excessively when traversing rutted streets or when negotiating four-track-wide train crossings.

An extremely accurate McCulloch fuel flow meter registered a miles-per-gallon figure of 18.01, however this figure represents the average gasoline used throughout the test, including runs through the drags, hill climbing (see photo) and 0-30, 0-46 and 0-60 acceleration checks. Mileage checks during normal highway driving, at sea level and using Mobilgas Ethyl, showed the tub capable of providing its owner with a 21.2 mileage figure.

Again we would like to point out that this

car has little in the way of speed equipment or special chassis or body modifications. It is used solely by the owner for trips to parts houses, to the market, and just around town in general. Therefore, its performance as far as acceleration and top speed is concerned can be considered mild. We chose this car as an initial road test subject so that comparisons can be made as we work our way up into hotter machines and competition cars.

Following is a list of specifications on this carefully constructed '27 T touring car:

#### CHASSIS:

Frame	1927 T
Front axle	'32 Ford
Rear end	'40 Mercury
Front tread	57 inches
Rear tread	58 inches
Wheelbase	100 inches
Tires front	5.50 x 15"
Tires rear	6.00 x 16"
Rear axle ratio	3.54 to 1
Transmission	'38 Ford with Zephyr gears
Brakes	'40 Ford Lockheed hydraulic
Shocks	Delco
Steering	Modified '37 Willys

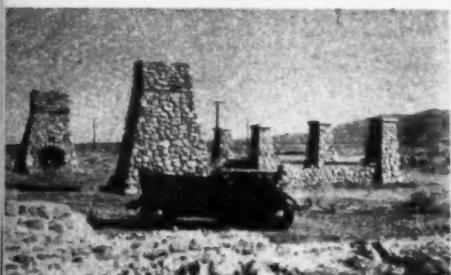
Uncluttered dash mounts Stewart Warner gauges in addition to those originally installed on T. Stock height windshield and non-channelled body gave the driver the utmost comfort during runs.





Road test took car to sea level at the Newport Yacht Harbor. Maximum elevation experienced during the over-200-mile test was 4000 feet.

Little-used desert road brought test party to deserted Calif. city, Llano. Experienced R & C drivers put the car through all of its paces. T out-accelerated a jackrabbit and two quail.



Average gas consumption during the test under all conditions was slightly better than 18 mpg. Here the T enters a tunnel on Angeles Crest. High winds made top speed run impossible.



HOODY

Type and year	1927 T touring
Color	Black enamel
<b>INSTRUMENTS:</b>	
Oil pressure gauge	Speedometer
Water temperature gauge	Plus stock T gauges
<b>ENGINE:</b>	
Bore	3 $\frac{1}{16}$ "
Stroke	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Displacement	239 cubic inches
Cam	Stock '37 Ford
Manifold	Stock '41 Ford
Heads	Stock '37, milled .080"
Ignition	Stock '37
Weight as tested	2,220 lbs.
Mileage	18,022 throughout test (Mobilgas Ethyl)



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**SPEEDOMETER CORRECTION:**

Indicated	Actual
30	27.37
45	41.55
60	54.81

**ACCELERATION:** (Average of four runs)

0-30	4.5 secs.
0-45	8.7 secs.
0-60	16.50 secs.

(Speeds not corrected for 2000 ft. elevation)

**TOP SPEED:** Accurate top speed not available due to winds and road condition.  
Estimated top speed — 92 mph.

**1/4 mile acceleration at Saugus drag strip:**  
77.25 mph.

Around a hairpin bend and on over the mountain pass. Car showed little tendency to lean or sway even during severe cornering. The T was easily capable of passing newer cars on hills.

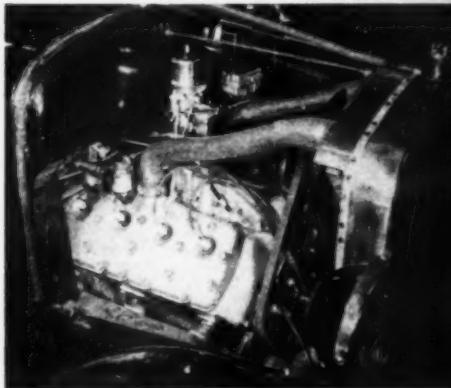


1940 Mercury rear end assembly mounts to the stock T spring through addition of a special bracket. Delco shocks are used at all wheels.

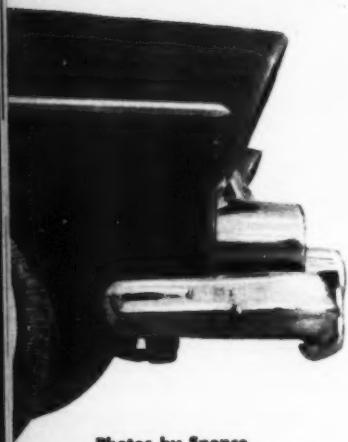
Un-split radius rods swivel from the lowered center crossmember. Notice headers with the bypasses leading to removable exhaust caps. The mufflers quiet engine to a scant whisper.



Nearly stock, but well tuned, '37 V8 engine sits well back in compartment. Firewall has been cut to get engine off of front wheels. Radiator is 3½ inch Buick core with T tanks.



Photos by Vincent Montaleone, Spence



Photos by Spence

# A SPOHN FOR DAYTON

*Transplanted German Custom*

German inspired and German built, this Spohn custom causes many a raised eyebrow around Dayton, Ohio, home of the present owner. The car was originally a 1952 Pontiac Catalina. Spohn trademarks are headlight extensions and sloping hood. Majority of Spohn cars are red.



**D**AYTON, OHIO, is the home of this Spohn-built, 1952 Pontiac Catalina custom. The car began its life as a perfectly normal, hardtop convertible as turned out in one of GM's many overseas assembly plants. Not long after it had found its way to a new owner, though, it was taken to Ravensburg, Germany, to the home of the fabulous Spohn coach works. Later it emerged as an entirely different car, what with its upswept rear fenders; its elongated, sloping nose and its deeply recessed headlights.

When the owner of the Spohn-Pontiac returned to this country from his tour of duty overseas, he found that people reacted differently to his auto than had those across the sea. In Germany, he noticed, people looked upon the car with mixed emotions of envy, desire, respect and awe while those on this side of the pond give it incredulous, disbelieving, uncomplimentary stares. This apparent impoliteness is not due, as one might think, to the rather unorthodox ideas of the German designer who toiled long and hard over his drawing board to please the cus-

tomer. Rather, it is the artist's bold use of converging lines to which we are not accustomed that give the onlookers something to discuss for a long time after they have seen the car cruise by.

The startling effect that the first Spohn cars had on the enthusiasts of this country is becoming but a memory as more and more of these fine German customs are being transplanted to the United States. One now has little difficulty in recognizing a Spohn car at a glance for the prolific shop has hit upon several design trade-marks that distinguish their cars from those locally rehashed.

Take the trim moldings, for example. Due to the unavailability of stainless steel and the high cost of chrome plating, the Germans have been forced to turn to polished aluminum for exterior trim. Instead of being finished with a bright luster that sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish aluminum from steel or chrome, Spohn moldings have a satiny, silken appearance. The rather dull finish presents the perfect contrast to the usual Spohn paint jobs of bright red. Instead

Pontiac rear bumper has been split and located further aft to protect continental kit. Notice rubber step pads between bumper and body panel. The spare swings down for access to trunk area.



of reflecting the blue sky, the green grass or the other uncomplimentary, natural colors of the world around us, as does the trim of American cars, Spohn trim remains constant in brilliance, always appearing as the designer planned.

The radically upturned rear fender sections are another unusual Spohn feature. The bold slash of polished aluminum on each fender is backed up by a set of three taillamps. The top lamp is the directional indicator light, the center unit is the taillight while the one at the bottom is the stoplight.

The original Pontiac rear bumper has been halved so that the trunk-mounted spare is visible around its entire circumference, however, the bumperettes have been relocated further rearward to afford adequate protection for the continental kit.

The leading edges of the rear fenders have been altered to simulate air scoops, though they are not functional. The Germans don't believe that the Pontiac, or any American production car for that matter, needs rear brake cooling for our heavy, soft sprung cars are not racing material as some restylists attempt to make them appear. Therefore, they aren't trying to trick anyone into thinking the scoops are real — they are purely a design feature.

Notice that the car has not been radically lowered, chopped or de-handled nor has it received any modifications which could cause driver discomfort. The car is, and will re-

main, perfectly capable of performance identical to any normal car of similar make and model. The overhang of the rear is not so excessive as to cause scraping or rubbing when entering or leaving a driveway, the lower body sides are not in danger of being scraped by a curbing any more than a stock Pontiac for the original ground clearance has been retained. Vision has not been hampered whatsoever.

The grille features another typical Spohn treatment. Large, polished aluminum panels have been contoured to the shape dictated by the designer's drawings and they are fitted precisely into the opening provided between the massive headlight extensions.

The nose of the hood has been entirely recontoured. The sloping effect was created by removing the formerly blunt shaped leading edge and shaping the hood to form one giant sweep of metal. As Pontiac owners may point out, the square shape of the hood was provided to cover the upper portion of the radiator and any drastic reshaping would require alterations to the cooling system. In this case the radiator was tilted rearward thus retaining the stock size core and tanks, but positioning it with less overall height.

At the present time the Spohn is the property of Dan Wylie of Dayton, Ohio, who acquired the car from the original owner by trading him even up for a house trailer. What the soldier is going to use as motive power for his trailer is not necessarily the concern

Spohn grille is composed of formed aluminum sections carefully fitted together. Parking lights are deeply inset in oval housings to protect them from damage. The smaller, square lamps between head and park lights are direction indicator units. Note large hood scoop.



of Mr. Wylie so he did not bother to inquire. What Wylie is interested in, is the fact that after several years of searching, he has finally obtained a Spohn for Dayton.



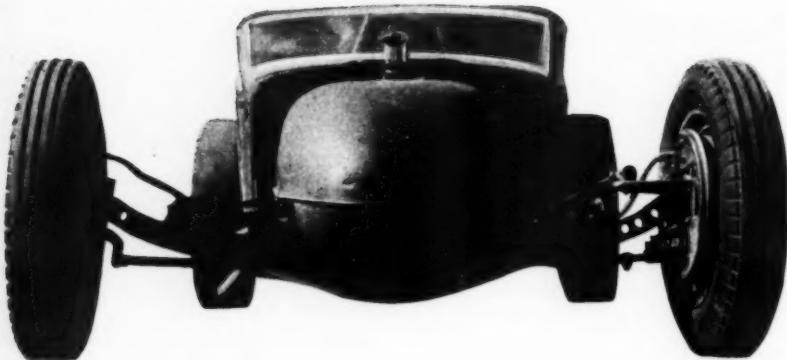
Typical Spohn rear fender trademark. Upswept fender section carries bold trim slash accentuating the design. Three lights are for the stop, tail and direction indicator elements.



The original owner wanted little or no additional rear end overhang, but Spohn wanted the upswept fenders; the result is this unorthodox design. Trim moldings, by Spohn, are aluminum. Rear of car has been dropped only two inches to level it off, little ground clearance is not the German idea of a hand-crafted automobile. Sloping hood gives driver greater road vision.



# DRAG RACES,



# INCORPORATED

**Club members put on biggest meet of '54.**

DOES ANYONE have an old abandoned drag strip going to waste in their backyard? If so, Drag Races, Inc., will bring their cars, and their timing equipment, and put on a display the likes of which you have probably never been privileged to see. It won't just be a show in the normal sense of the word—for the members will be competing for annual point standings and as such will really be going all out in an effort to roll up as many points as possible. They'll bring coupes, sedans, street roadsters, dragsters and a wide assortment of those fantastic rail jobs. Many of the cars will be top record holders in their classes and included among them will be the Yates—Mikkelsen dragster that recently startled the draggin' world when the 1200 pound car blasted through the standing quarter mile at the unprecedented speed of 144 mph!

How is it possible to arrange for the guaranteed arrival of fifty outstanding cars? Who are the men behind this organization who are willing to pit their machines against anything that the country has to offer?—indeed the world?

22

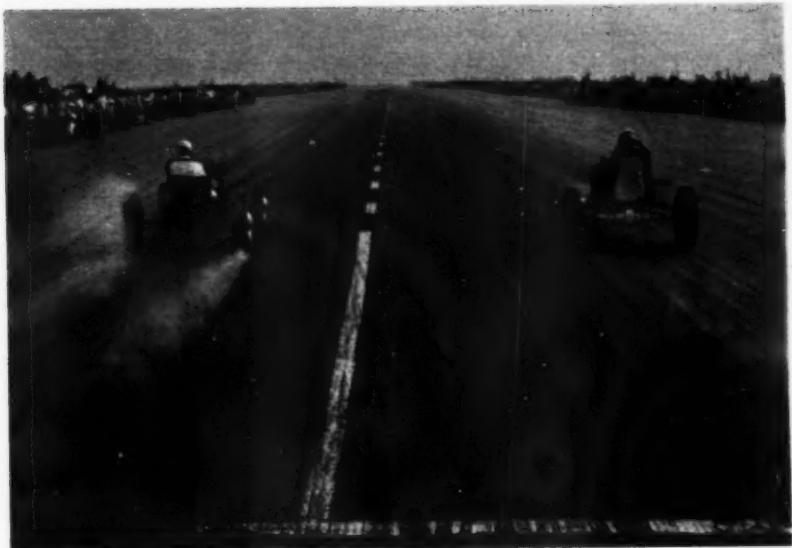
Drag races, Incorporated, was formed with the idea of banding together the most outstanding cars and drivers that the sport of drag racing has produced since its inception—and that takes in a lot of territory. The fundamental idea behind the formation of such a group of enthusiasts was the idea of building up some sort of hospital fund from which money could be drawn in case any of the competitors were hurt during a meet. Secondly, the founders had been toying with the idea of devising a point system whereby the slower cars could compete with those being much faster on an equal basis. This system would bring the "underdog" into the limelight and reduce the glory formerly absorbed by the owners of extremely fast, competition machinery. A point schedule was drawn up and, after a few revisions, emerged as follows:

50 points are awarded for the top eliminator of each class.

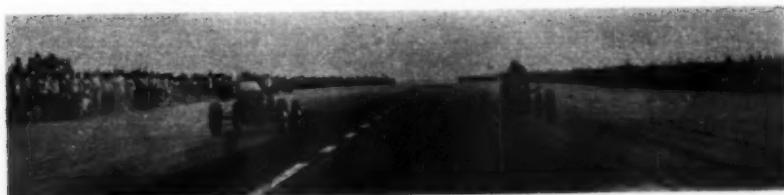
30 points are awarded for the fastest time in each class.

20 points are given a competitor for show-

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**GOING...**



**...GOING...**



**...GONE!**

ing up at a specific drag meet.

20 points are given for the second fastest time in each class.

10 points for the third fastest in each class.

Notice that no points are awarded for the car having the top time of a meet. Previously the fastest car of the day would "blow up" before eliminations began but would still be eligible for award for having covered the quarter the quickest. Under the new system, if the car holding the fastest time of the meet "scatters" its engine before the run-offs, the next car in line will become eligible for the title of top eliminator. If he blows up, then the *third fastest* car could become the top eliminator. However, instead of points, the top car of the day is given a Government Bond as are the other fastest cars in each of the many classes.

In the manner outlined above the owner of a late model sedan, say, can compete on an equal basis with the owner of a rail job that consistently turns in the 130's.

At the end of each drag season the points are tallied up and special awards, in the form of trophies, are awarded those having the highest standings in each class.

Contrary to popular, but erroneous, belief, competitors receive no cash or other returns for running their cars. Such money as will eventually be considered as being over and above the limit set for the hospital fund, will go toward parties and other gaieties decided upon by the members, as well as trophies, etc.

Of even greater advantage to the fellow with the not-particularly-hot car is the corporation's system of arranging cars into the various classes. Take street roadsters, for example. There is not one but *three* distinct classes for this group. Street (full-fendered) roadsters with the engine set back in the frame up to a maximum of 12 inches and running hot fuel comprise one category. Street roadsters with the engine in its stock location and running fuel are segregated into a second class. Thirdly, street roadsters with the en-

gine in its stock location and using only ordinary gasoline for fuel make up the last division. In addition, non-fendered roadsters are similarly broken down into three categories as are coupes, sedans and so forth. Above and beyond all of that, engine displacement sizes further the number of classes.

It all adds up to one simple fact. There are nearly as many classes as there are cars, thus everyone has a much better chance of winning than under any other system yet devised.

Add to this the fact that a hospital fund is being accumulated (strip promoters are asked to donate *only* that which they deem sufficient) to be used in case of injury to any driver during an event and Drag Races, Inc., can't go wrong.

As an example, when the organization was in its state of founding a driver was injured during a meet. The hospital fund took care of all the medical expenses, amounting to \$134, despite the fact that the brand new fund boasted a capital of less than \$200. At the present time, however, the fund is rapidly expanding and is capable of meeting any medical emergency.

Drag Races, Inc., recently held their third meet of 1954 and in so doing chalked up an attendance far surpassing any similar event so far this year. The meet was held near Bakersfield, Calif., which lies some three hours driving time north from Los Angeles. Qualifying started bright and early on a Saturday with the final eliminations being run off late Sunday afternoon. Over 160 competitors showed up which is far above the guaranteed number promised by the club. Needless to say, the spectators as well as the various drivers and crew members were treated to a show of such gigantic proportions that it will be a long time before it will be forgotten.

The famed Bean Bandits walked off with the fastest time of the meet (for which they received a bond) when their roadster streaked down the quarter at 136 mph. The reader may





Speed-trap bound, dragster gets under way during the recent Bakersfield meet, biggest of the year.



Cerney's Cad-equipped Olds, with a floor shift, breaks the second light at the end of the quarter.



Coupe (?) storms out of the chute on the way to a new record. Notice roll bar protruding from body.

A sight that will probably soon become familiar. A stock Corvette leaves the start on run of 78.26.



note that this is somewhat slower than the Bandit's fastest time at another strip so it should be pointed out that the electric eyes at Bakersfield were fully inside the 1320-foot quarter mile strip and the starter allowed no one even so much as an inch of rolling start before beginning the run.

Car after car blasted away from the starting line from early one morning until late the next afternoon. So swiftly did they get under way that when the clocks temporarily bogged down at least ten cars were sent off the line on their runs before the starting line officials could be told to "cease fire!"

The strip used for the event had a feature that few sections of the country could boast. It was surfaced with asphalt and extended for *one square mile!* With such a vast territory (many people compared it to the Bonneville Salt Flats) it was easy to select the ideal location for the strip. The starting line was quite close to one edge of the area so cars had nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile to decelerate and turn from the course before running back along a carefully marked return-strip for another try at the clocks.

Competition was keen as a few of the formerly undisputed top eliminators scattered their engines — thus making it possible for the second fastest car to move up in overall point standings.

As if the sight, sound and smell of hundreds of trips down the lane wasn't enough, the Bean Bandits raffled off their original dragster, sans engine, to finance a get-well program for one of their members recently stricken with polio. The engine-less car, as a fitting departing gesture, was fitted with a mill and taken through the course on a swift trip as the Bandits sadly watched the familiar sight for the last time.

The newly formed organization is swiftly adding to its roster and on several occasions whole clubs have signed up in entirety. In addition to those already mentioned, the membership includes such draggin' greats as Don Yates and the Yates-Mikkelsen dragster, Art

Chrisman (MOTOR LIFE 200 Mile Club member), the widely known Spaghetti Benders with their 130 mph, Edelbrock-equipped coupe, Lloyd & Krant with their 130 mph cycle and so on almost endlessly.

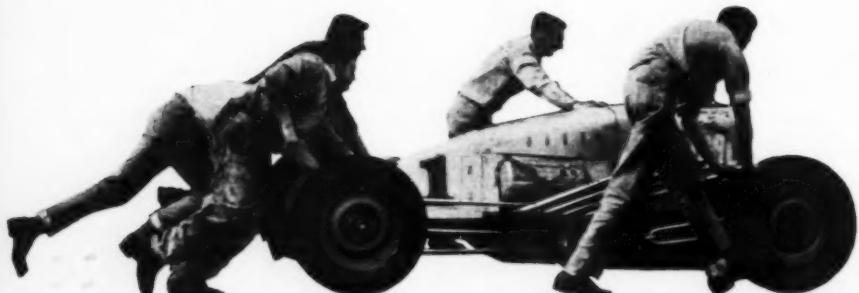
Incidentally, the aforementioned Spaghetti Benders are primarily responsible for the club and its introduction to recognition. They have, as you have undoubtedly heard, been close to drag racing since its development and they are as much a part of Bonneville as the salt itself.

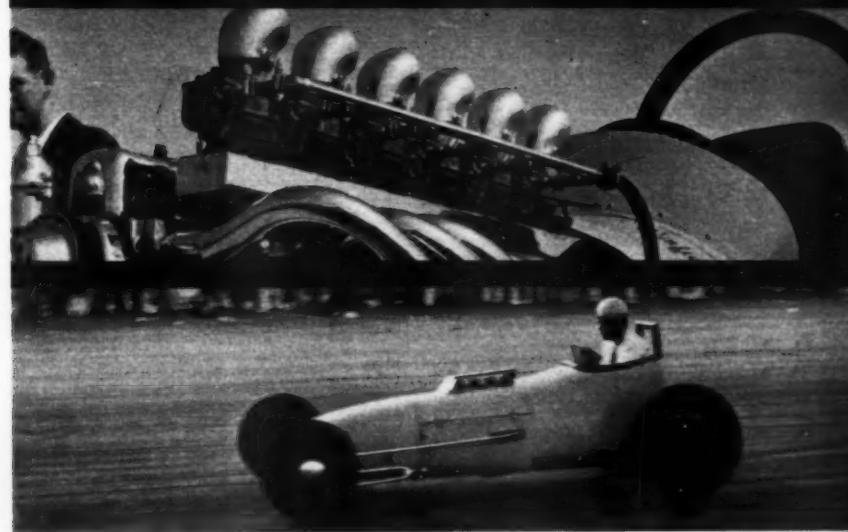
Anyone will be considered for membership in the club and, at the present time, a car is not a prime requisite for joining. All those sincerely interested in the organization can receive full particulars by writing to the club president, Tom Liss, at 5517 Hazelton Ave., Culver City, Calif.

Following are the available results from the Bakersfield meet of March 6-7, 1954:

Mod. Rdstr.— Tony Lee Waters (Top eliminator)	130.00
Fendered coupe ('35-'40) (Also outstanding car of meet) "Drifters", Redondo	124.56
Rail Jobs — John Gilbert	131.86
Mod. Coupe — Jim Nelson	125.31
Street roadster (fuel, set-back) — L. G. Scott	125.17
Street roadster (gas class) — Tony Berardinini	110.65
Street roadster (fuel, non set-back) '40 sedan (gas) — Don Corwin	101.86
Fendered coupe (fuel) ('29-'34) — Don Cook	125.48
Stripped coupe (fuel) ('29-'34) — Ike Iacono	120.00
4 cyl. rail job (fuel) — Kent Startup	116.16
Unlimited cycle — Lloyd-Krant	130.00
Mod. Rdstr. (Top time of meet)	136.42

The above is only a portion of the results in a few classes but due to temporary clock-fouling no additional figures are available at presstime.





# FIRE-POWERED FORD



**Good for 173 mph!**

By Dean Moon

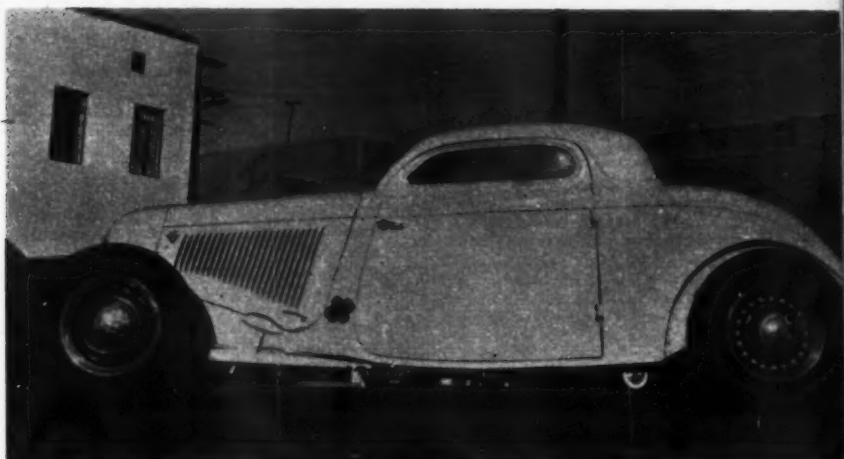
DOUG HARTEL, of Orange, Calif., has literally grown up with the sport of hot rodding. It has been through his progressiveness that many engine and chassis modifications that we now consider commonplace have come into being. Doug's knowledge was gained through both actual experience and through his long friendship with Chuck Potvin, now the manufacturer of the widely used Potvin cams. Both Potvin and Hartelt attended the same school, both had an insatiable desire to work on automobiles and both were instinctively drawn toward things mechanical so it was only natural that the two should meet and become long and fast friends, several years ago.

Though the past years have seen a good many competition cars, and engines, built and tested by the two, they are still searching for the answer to the right combination of engine, chassis and body. Something that will provide astounding top speed, as well as initial acceleration, but will also handle as a fast car should. An equally important fac-

tor, the two feel, is that the car should have a reasonably good appearance — something that is difficult to attain if one is seeking performance and is willing to pass up good looks in an effort for more speed.

One of the more recent joint ventures for speed and power is the Chrysler V8 that provides the punch for this '34 Ford coupe. Since both Chuck and Doug are perfectionists in the work they turn out, the engine saw many an hour of dynamometer time before it received the final stamp of approval. Modifications include a four inch bore for a total displacement of 364 cubic inches, Jahns pistons, electronic balancing, Potvin cams (naturally), 5/16" chrome moly push rods, Studebaker tappets and adjustment screws, 2" intake valves, 1 13/16" exhaust valves, Harman and Collins magneto and a Hillborne fuel injection system. The final dyno run showed an output of a solid 370 horsepower using straight alcohol for fuel. The aforementioned engine turned the trick

ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954



Firestone Indianapolis tires are used for the lakes meets; asphalt slicks for drag races. Nose section was scratch-built using fender sections placed together like jigsaw puzzle.

The '34 coupe was built at Post Body Works in Orange, Calif. All of the metal work, such as the formed nose and the chopped top with its metal insert, was done by owner Doug Hartell.



at a recent SCTA lakes meet for the little white '34 turned an earthshaking 173 miles an hour. At the conclusion of the year's meets, the coupe held both the SCTA and the RTA class records.

Not being content with merely flat-out run records, Doug and Chuck took Doug's coupe to the Santa Ana drag strip where the clocks ticked out the time of 122 in the quarter.

The performance-proven engine was loaned to Fred Carillo who built a streamliner around it and took it to Bonneville last year in an attempt to shatter American and International speed records. Due to what was believed to be a collapsed wheel, which resulted in the complete destruction of the car, the hopes of Carillo, Potvin and Hartelt were somewhat shaken. However, reliable sources have estimated the speed of the streamliner somewhere near the 270 mph mark. True, body design has a great deal to do with such speeds as this, but the engine is still what makes a car go. The trio are completely sold on the engine and its capabilities.

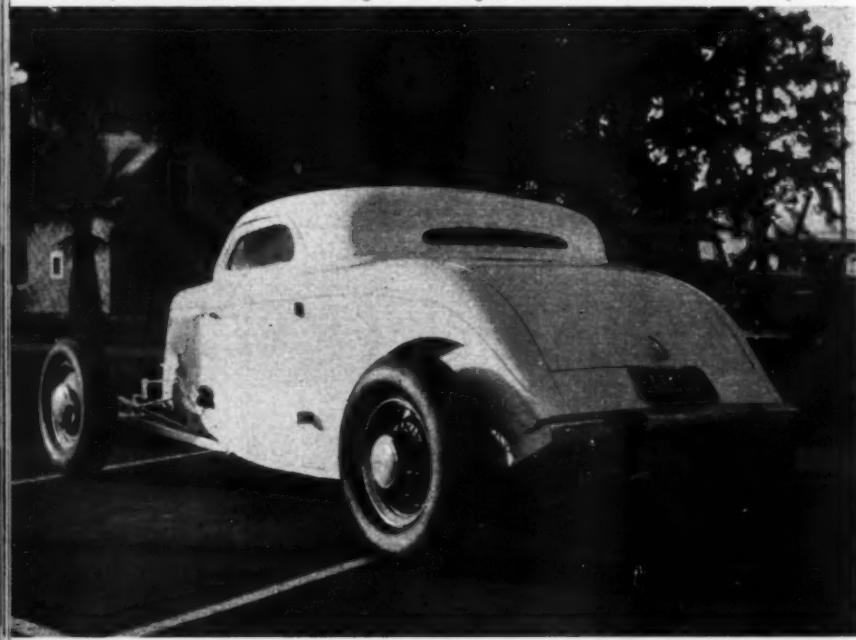
The coupe, as stated previously, is a '34 which has been extensively and, it might be added, thoughtfully modified to give as little drag as possible and a small frontal area, but

it still has a good overall appearance. Immediately noticeable are the radically chopped top, the slightest channel job and the nose section formed of discarded fender sections. The interior of the storming rod has been completely gutted leaving only the necessary body supports and such instruments as are necessary to record conditions beneath the hood when the car is doing its bit at the drags, lakes or salt flats.

A heavy gauge steel roll bar has been installed to protect the driver in case of mishap and a new, heavy steel firewall added as an extra safety precaution. An aircraft bucket seat, rigidly secured to the frame — not the floor — replaces the former seat arrangement and a heavy safety belt insures the utmost protection should it be called upon to prove its worth.

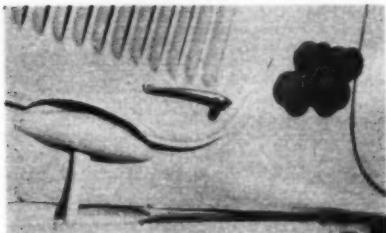
What the future holds for Hartelt's coupe is a good matter for speculation. If Doug and Chuck continue to keep the midnight oil burning at both Potvin's shop and at the Post Body Works, where Doug is employed, as they have during the past few months, the coupe's top time of 173 may turn out to look just like a milk run.

The quick-change rear end center section was raised by reversing it. This keeps the drive-shaft, the transmission and the engine on a higher level than would otherwise be possible.

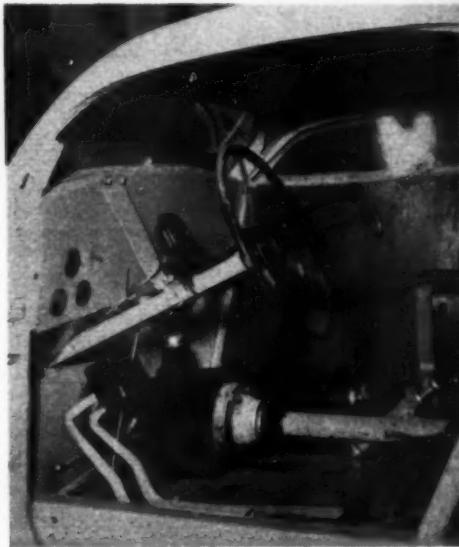




Doug Hartell, in car, awaits O.K. from starter at lakes meet before starting on 1½ mile run prior to entering the timing traps. The top time of the white coupe was 173. Engine is a Chrysler V8 greatly modified. Car also roared through the standing quarter mile at 122 mph.

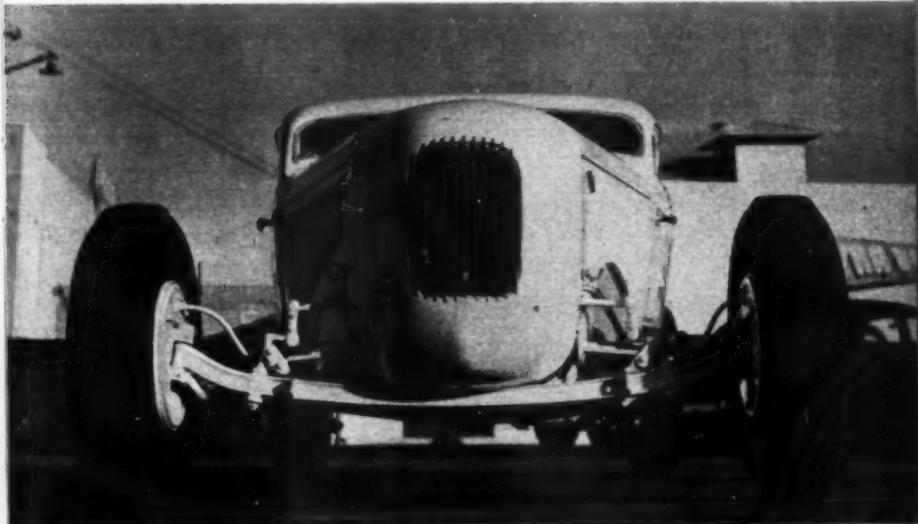


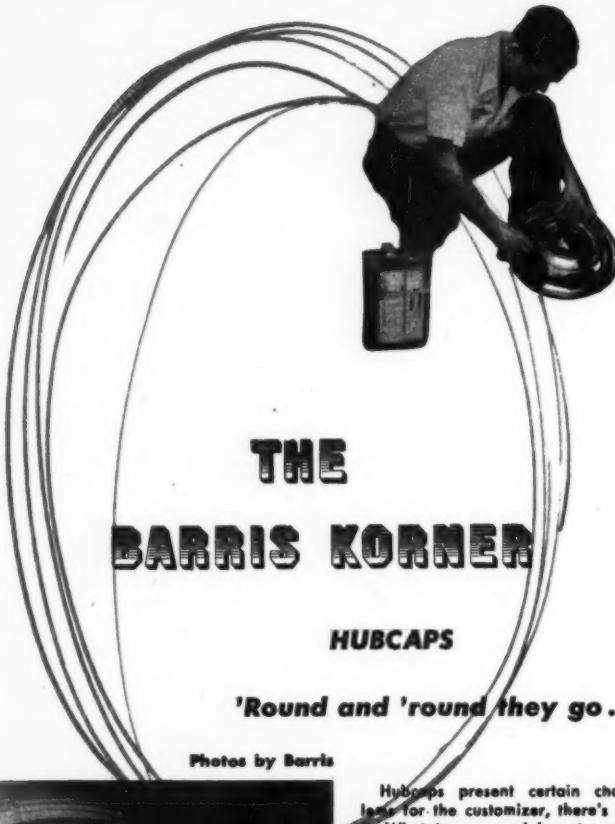
Chrysler's exhaust is ducted through flexible tubing protruding through the cowl side. Note metal cover over the pitman arm to lessen the wind resistance, excessive at over 170 mph.



Interior of the car boasts competition only! The steel firewall and the roll bar (not shown) are added safety features required by SCTA and RTA regulations. Bucket seat has safety belt.

Though it is not apparent in this view, the under side of the car is covered by a belly pan. Wind turbulence is kept at a minimum by placing the full pan high off of the ground.

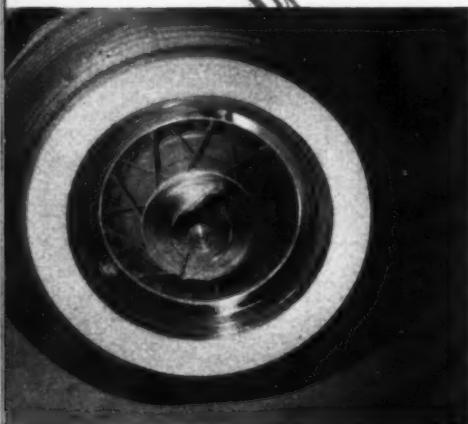




**THE  
BARRIS KORNER  
HUBCAPS**

**'Round and 'round they go...**

Photos by Barris



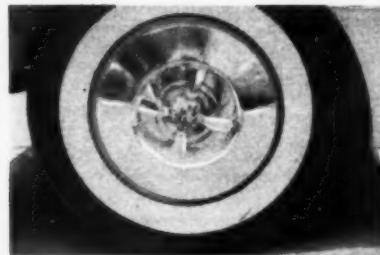
Hubcaps present certain challenging problems for the customizer, there's no doubt about it. What to use, and how to use it, what type of effect to create and what actually constitutes an original hubcap design — all of these questions and many more are asked here at our shop. From all indications hubcaps are beginning to come within the interests of restylists who are tired of being content to merely replace original hubcaps with those from another make of automobile.

One must have a starting place for an idea, though, so here are a few samples of hubcaps that we have built here at the shop and others built by individuals. All of them have one thing in common, aside from being round, and that is they create a center of interest and place the designer's emphasis on the wheels. Though few readers may realize it, hubcaps represent the largest single expanse of chrome or polished stainless steel on a modern car and they must be treated accordingly.

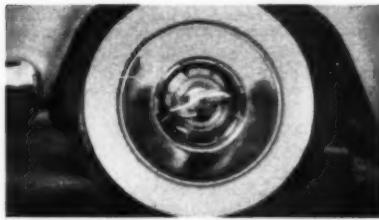
ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954



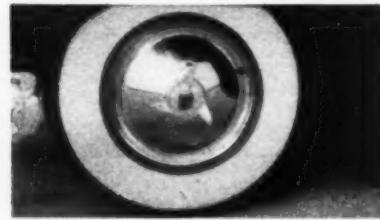
Deluxe Plymouth wire wheels, chrome plated, are fitted to this Chrysler Imperial Sedan. Spoked wheels give a car a sense of European styling. Adding to the effect, the fenders have been cut out and a flair added around the edge thus the wheels have become suited to an American car.



Closely resembling the hubcaps used on the '53 Oldsmobile Fiesta, the hubcaps on this car are actually '53 Cadillac with an added four-bladed spinner. Each of the four spinners were shaped from sheet metal, chromed and bolted to caps. Spinners appear to flicker when they revolve.



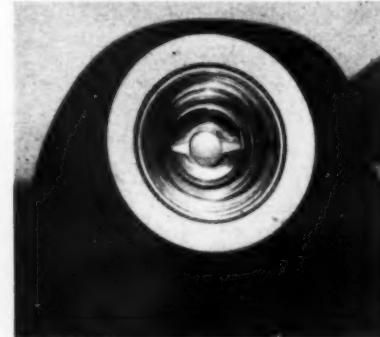
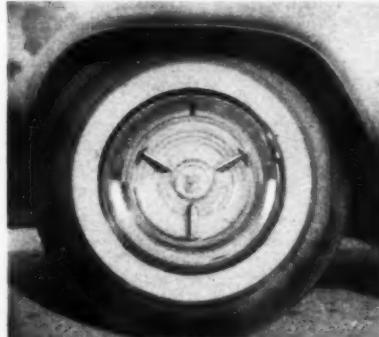
Another hubcap based on the '53 Cadillac item. The inner panels were removed and those from a Buick replaced so cap could be used on this car. The small diamonds were used originally on an early Studebaker. The hubcap and spinner have been goldplated to match color of Buick kustom.



This example is of a '53 Studebaker hubcap set flush against the rim of the wheel. The triple-bladed spinner is an accessory as offered by Barris Kustom Accessories and can be adapted to practically any hubcap. Radically lowered car, built by Kustom Shop, is a 1950 Mercury.

Gold plated spinner bars were added to change appearance of this Olds Fiesta hubcap. Shop crest has been placed in center of the disc. The possibilities for creating hubcap ideas are almost boundless due to the great variety of caps available from custom accessory shops.

A special spinner has been adapted to fit the center of this hubcap. Dark areas of the cap are painted a copper metallic shade of lacquer. Painted hubcaps are becoming increasingly popular as customizing enthusiasts are constantly on the look out for new and untried gimmicks.



# THE FASTEST ACC IN THE W



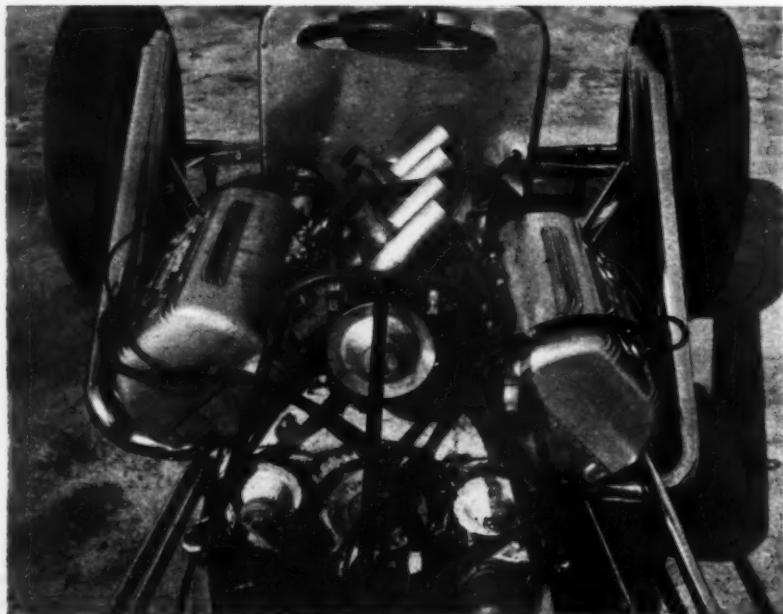
# ACCELERATING CAR WORLD!





This is the car that turned 144 mph in quarter mile! Long exhaust stacks have been "tuned" to perfection, aiding engine's efficiency. Arden heads extend from body for cooling purposes and allow body to be as narrow as possible to reduce wind resistance. Chopped off appearance is due to lack of tail section which is to be added in the near future. Driver is Don Yates.

Here it is! This is the 400 hp. giant that gives the car a greater power-to-weight ratio than any dragster known to exist at the time. '40 Mercury block is almost dwarfed beneath the Arden heads and the crossed injector tubes. Proximity of engine to driver causes steering wheel to extend through the aluminum firewall. First three runs netted 137, 139 and 144 mph.



# 144 MPH DRAGSTER

**Yates-Mikkelsen car boasts Ardun-equipped Mercury engine; fantastic weight-to-power ratio of 3 to 1**

By Barney Navarro

THE RECORD for a quarter-mile acceleration now stands at 144 miles per hour! This extraordinary speed was posted recently by Don Yates in a Mercury-engined dragster at the Santa Ana, Calif., airstrip. By covering the distance in an elapsed time of 8.9 seconds, the machine now is the top candidate for title "World's Fastest Accelerating Car."

We've all read figures relating to weight and horsepower ratios, but none can compare to the creation built by Don and Ray Yates, of Inglewood, Calif., in conjunction with Verne Mikkelsen.

The Yates-Mikkelsen car, weighing less than 1200 pounds with driver and developing 400 hp, has a weight-to-power ratio of 3 to 1. (The actual weight of the car fully equipped for a run down the strip is 1197 lbs., however the round figure of 1200 lbs. will be used as a basis for the figures to follow.) This can be more fully appreciated when it is noted that the weight-to-power ratio of the average American low-priced passenger car in stock form is in the neighborhood of 30 or 35 to 1.

A unique but easily visualized illustration would be one horsepower devoted to the task of accelerating a three-pound quart bottle of milk down the street as rapidly as possible.

At first glance, this weight-to-power ratio may appear to be impossible. The fastest cars in the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race never even approach the three pounds per hp ratio. But the Indy cars rarely pack 400 hp under the hood and the few that do, don't weigh 1200 pounds with the driver in the seat. This does not mean that we are recommending that Indianapolis cars be reduced in weight; they are used as a comparison because they are most often looked upon as the ultimate.

A dragster, however, is built for a different purpose—one that is highly specialized—and many items considered essential on a conventional race car are simply excess iron.

The 400 hp may also seem excessive, but they are full sized horses and not ponies. The 284 cubic inch Ardun-equipped Mercury V8 engine, burning 80 per cent nitromethane and 20 per cent methanol was responsible for the phenomenal horsepower figure. One hundred of the 400 horses can be attributed directly to "canned" horsepower, for the engine produces, according to accurate dynamometer

tests, 300 hp on straight alcohol. The same engine, burning high octane gasoline, would be capable of approximately 270 hp.

Many Chrysler enthusiasts may wonder why the old Mercury (or Ford) flathead V8 block with an Ardun ohv conversion is preferred for a dragster power plant. Considering the large displacement and low cost of a Chrysler engine and the fact that it is already equipped with hemispherical combustion chambered heads, the high cost of the Ardun may seem excessive. As a matter of fact, except for the all important fuel factor, use of the Ardun is pointless. But all-out dragsters do not use gasoline, so we must examine this aspect fully to understand the reason.

As previously stated, 100 hp of the engine can be credited directly to 80 per cent nitromethane. Such a high percentage in a Chrysler would literally wreck the engine. This is not because of any inherent structural weaknesses in the Chrysler—it is capable of standing more stress than the Mercury—but because of the type of material used in the construction of the cylinder heads. Again we do not wish to suggest structural weakness, for the Chrysler heads are among the strongest. Instead, it is a matter of combustion chamber and spark plug cooling.

Ardun heads are cast of an aluminum alloy so are more capable of maintaining a low surface temperature in the combustion chamber than are the cast iron Chrysler's.

Coincident with this condition is the problem of cooling the spark plugs. Again the Ardun layout is far superior to the Chrysler. The Chrysler has very little water jacket space around the plug base so plug cooling is quite difficult. The Ardun not only has more jacket space but gains an added advantage through the use of aluminum and its high rate of heat conductivity. Due to insufficient cooling of the plugs in the Chrysler heads, the coldest Champion plug available is necessary with a fuel mixture containing 30% nitromethane. In many cases a 20% mixture is the maximum tolerable. Competing against an engine that uses an 80% mixture with one that uses a 20% or 30% mixture is something for which very few fellows would show enthusiasm.

The Yates brothers and Mikkelsen dragster, we must remember, only weighs 1200



pounds complete with driver. Again the Arduin Ford has an advantage, aluminum heads save considerable weight, so this plus a few other engine features, produces a power plant that is much lighter than the Chrysler V8.

#### Engine Specifications:

1940 Mercury block bored to.....	3 5/16"
Stroke .....	4 1/8"
Heads .....	Arduin
Camshaft.....	Herbert Roller
Carburetor.....	Hillborn Injection
Ignition.....	Hornam & Collins Magneto
Pistons.....	Speedomotive
Crankshaft.....	Miller stroked and paralleled Mercury
Horsepower.....	400 @ 5700 rpm
Carburetor.....	Hillborn Injection

Though the present owner of the dragster's engine is Mikkelsen, credit for its conception must go to Clark Cagle, the former owner. It was Cagle's dreams and efforts that made the power plant capable of its record breaking performance. The day before Don Yates drove the car to a speed of 144 miles per hour at the end of the Santa Ana drag strip, Cagle sold the engine to Mikkelsen.

Credit for the chassis goes to the Yates brothers, Ray and Don, although Don probably has had more to do with its present state than Ray. This is due to the fact that Ray only recently returned from active duty in the Paratroops. His return home took place just one day after Don set the record at Santa Ana. Ray is home to stay so they've resumed operations as a team.

Functional in spite of its weird appearance, the dragster's chassis contributes immeasurably to record breaking performance. With 400 horsepower to propel 1200 pounds of weight, one is presented with a fantastic traction problem. In second gear more thrust

is available on the surface of the rear tires than the weight of the car, even in high gear this would be true if it were not for losses in power transmission from the engine to the rear wheels. In order to gain the maximum traction possible between the wheels so most of the available horsepower can be utilized, Don has placed the engine as far to the rear as is possible with a front-engined machine. Traction is further improved by reducing unsprung weight to a minimum. The rear end assembly, an early Ford unit, has been reduced in weight by 60 pounds. Such a reduction allows the torsion bar springing to cause the wheels to follow the variations in pavement contour more closely. It is a well established fact that wheels that follow the "hills" and "valleys" of the pavement afford better traction than those that hit the high spots.

In addition to keeping the wheels on the pavement, maintaining maximum tire surface contact is another big problem. Tires with tread, such as is used on passenger cars, affords a very poor coefficient of friction, so slick tires, like those used on asphalt race tracks, are used. These slicks differ from the track tires inasmuch as they have a flat tread. There is no crown whatsoever, so maximum surface contacts the pavement. The inflation pressure, which is only 6 pounds, causes no end of trouble. Sheet metal screws must be positioned at many points around the wheel rims to prevent slippage between the tire beads and the rims. The rims are drilled with numerous holes and the screws are secured into the tire beads. The low pressure also makes it necessary to anchor the inner tube valve stems to prevent centrifugal force from throwing them inside the tires.

In contrast to unsafe suspension practices indulged in by many dry lake contestants, the Yates brothers' chassis is the paragon of safety. One of a pair of fast runs at the Saugus Drag Strip definitely proved the life insurance value of good suspension. At the end of a warm-up run of 137 miles per hour, Don applied the brakes too firmly and caused all four wheels to slide. (Front brakes have been added since the accompanying photo was taken.) Wheels that don't roll don't steer, so Don soon found himself in a spin. Although the car spun 5 times at that fantastic rate of speed, he experienced no difficulty. All four wheels stayed on the pavement and showed no tendency to lift. After regaining his composure he went back to the starting line and made another run which resulted in a speed of 139 mph at the end of the quarter, the fastest run of the day. (Ed. note. After Don's run of 137 mph at which time he spun out, the car was at a complete rest within 250 feet of the finish line. Don, therefore, should be entitled to the distinction of having the fastest *decelerating* as well as accelerating car, right?)

Some of you may wonder why the car's speed varied between the Saugus and the Santa Ana drag strips. Although they are both spoken of as quarter mile strips, Santa Ana contestants are allowed to fudge a little. They can actually get a bit of a rolling start before they enter the quarter mile run. At Saugus all contestants start from the starting line and not so much as one foot behind. Another handicap, though slight, is the uphill angle of the Saugus strip. Don Yates' spectacular spin was indirectly caused by another Saugus disadvantage. The stopping distance is very short so Don was a little doubtful if he could halt in time. It was this doubt that caused him to apply the brakes too hard. Having taken no runs previously at Saugus while traveling at such a speed, he had insufficient faith in his ability to stop soon enough.

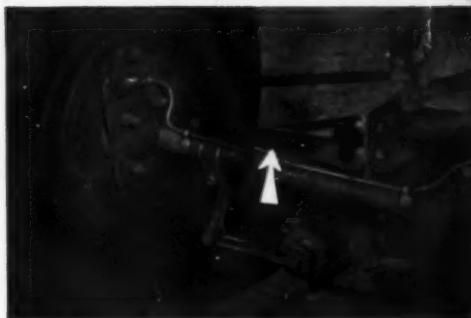
Contrast Don's adventurous way of doing things with the almost overly cautious procedures used by Mauri Rose in testing the GM Firebird (March, '54, MOTOR LIFE) and you'll probably want to take up bird watching as a hobby. The Firebird is considered to have a terrific amount of horsepower for its low weight (and, true, it does) but its power to weight ratio is only 7.5 to 1, whereas the Yates brothers and Mikkelsen dragster has a ratio of 3 to 1, less than half.

By way of comparison, if a man fell from the top of the Empire State Building (approximately one quarter of a mile high) at the same time that Don took off from the chute at a drag strip, Don would reach the end of the quarter mile before the luckless man reached the base of the building. (This is a comparison only. A person falling from the top of the Empire State Building could not reach the ground due to the projections of the building.)

Oldsmobile enthusiasts may point out that they can attain approximately 72 mph in the quarter mile with their highly tuned 88 which is half the speed of the dragster. Therefore by merely doubling their horsepower, they reason, they could maintain Don's terrific rate of speed. This, naturally, is not so far in order to double one's speed in a given distance, one must quadruple his horsepower. A '54 88, for example, boasting 185 hp stock, would have to have nearly 750 hp discounting, of course, the effects of wind resistance, frictional losses through the power train, etc.

Inasmuch as the Yates-Mikkelsen dragster is a comparatively new car and as such has only been run a very few times, what the future holds for the car we must wait and see. Radical changes are being planned for the machine and, who knows, maybe they can more closely approach, or even exceed, the theoretical limit of 167 mph in the standing start quarter mile.

ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954



Rear backing plates have been drilled out for lightness and for cooling purposes. The arrow indicates the torsion bar arm. The car has not been equipped with swing axles as photo might suggest, early Ford unit has been lightened by approximately 60 pounds. The little unsprung weight causes the wheels to follow contours. Rear tire pressure for runs is but 6 pounds.



Front spring consists of two-leaf transverse, Ford item. Front brakes were recently added.

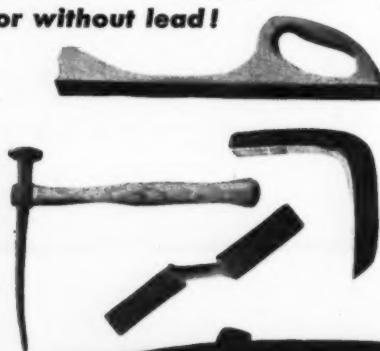


# TOP CHOPPING – THE RIGHT WAY!



## PART II — COMPLETION

**The roughly welded  
seams are finished without  
the use of a body grinder  
or without lead!**



JUST IN case you happened to miss last month's installment of this top chopping operation, we'll give you a quick run down on what has taken place since this '54 Chevy pickup cab was delivered to Sam's Auto Body in Pasadena, Calif.

The cab belongs to R & C, and its readers, and as such is to receive whatever suggestions you might suggest. Immediately after the top job is concluded, the cab will be mounted on a Chevy chassis equipped with an Oldsmobile V8 engine coupled to a HydraMatic transmission. (The engine installation was

The elongated top panel is rejoined by adding strips of body metal cut to the proper width. Individual pieces are tack welded in place and, after being contoured properly, are welded in solidly then forged which eliminates weld ridge. The text explains why top had to be lengthened.



Photos by Spence

covered in Building a Chevmobile, R & C for Sept., 1953). Articles dealing with alterations to the car will be generalized upon so that readers can apply such modifications to their particular cars, regardless of body style. We feel that this will be the answer for those who have written to us requesting specific customizing information on this or that but the answer to which we have been unable to give them — until now.

The top was reduced three and a half inches in height by eliminating that much metal from the rear, or vertical portion of the cab top. The windshield posts and leading door edges were lowered a similar amount by cutting away almost four inches of metal as measured along the slant of the posts. The forward posts, naturally, did not align properly when the upper section of the cab was lowered into its new position due to the rearward angle of the posts. (The posts could have been sloped rearward to facilitate alignment but, as we explained last issue, this would destroy the basic lines of the cab and make the length of the top appear out of proportion with the bottom of the body.) The top had to be lengthened approximately one inch. This necessitated severing the top from side to side and adding a strip of metal across its width. The door tops were also lengthened as described in detail last month.

That brings us up to date on our guinea pig so without further ado we will proceed with the top insert itself and with the finish metal work thus completing the roof lowering operation.

**FINISH METAL WORK.** Upon our second visit to Sam's Auto Body we heard sounds of power hammering and metal banging as we approached the shop door. Once inside we found Sam busily pounding away on several one-inch-wide inserts for the gap across the turret top. Noting the expression on our face he hurriedly explained that such a long, thin strip of metal, as would be required to plug the opening, is seldom added to a panel in its entirety. Instead, it is cut into sections and each separate piece added individually.

The top, as the photos illustrate and as was covered in detail last month, was halved as near to the rear curve of the top as possible to take advantage of the strength-adding contours, but nevertheless a certain amount of buckling and warping was experienced when the torch was brought into play.

As soon as the welds joining the various sections of the top had been completed, the top itself slightly resembled the Pacific ocean during a storm. The sight of the buckles and waves made us shrink with fear but Sam reassured us that this was quite normal and within a short time they would become but a memory, thank heavens!

A power hammer was attached to the air



Area surrounding welds was cleaned of the burnt paint and weld scale by light grinding, then a flat Vixen body file was used to eliminate the defects. Since file will pass over the low spots in the panel, the body man can see where additional work is needed. Note tools on the top.



Low spots are raised through use of a slapper. All-purpose dolly is being held under the panel and slapper pounded around low areas. This will bring concave surfaces up to the proper level.

Final filing serves two purposes: It eliminates pits and defects around welds and shows up any minor low spots which need additional working. No lead whatsoever was used during the project.



hose and soon the gooseneck apparatus was pounding a heavy tattoo on the thin metal. As if by magic the frighteningly wrinkled top became reasonably smooth once again as Sam deftly wielded the hammer back and forth across the top. Smaller waves were hammered up, or down, as was necessary and the top again took on its normal shape.

As Sam continued with the work at hand we began scouting around the small but fully equipped shop. Everywhere we looked we saw nothing but the most modern equipment. Being more or less familiar with custom body shops, how they operate and the materials usually kept on hand for restyling cars, we felt that there was something missing. It was conspicuous by its absence but it took a while before we realized just what it was. At last it dawned on us. Lead! There was not even so much as a single stick of lead to be seen in or near the shop.

Sam confirmed our suspicions by saying that there is little sense in using body lead — at least not in the quantity used by a good many shops. True, lead is necessary for filling minor depressions that might happen to be backed up by a totally enclosed body panel or brace, but this business of using lead as a quick way of completing a job is strictly for the birds.

By way of proof, Sam began the finish metal work on the top insert. The project was started by grinding off the burned paint and scale that had accumulated around the parallel welds across the top. Then, much to our surprise, he put the grinder away stating it would not be used again. No grinder? No lead? The reader may doubt this and for good reason but, there before our eyes, Sam finished off the top with nothing more than a hammer, a dolly, the torch and a file.

This is how he did it. Using the torch Sam heated an inch-long section of the weld to a hot cherry red. Then, quickly putting the torch aside before the metal cooled appreciably, he took up his hammer and dolly and swiftly pounded the small area. The welded ridge became flattened, thus conforming to the surrounding metal, and the adjoining pieces of metal and the weld itself became united as a single, flat section with no visible break or line. This operation was continued clear across the top on both parallel welds.

From a distance the top was beginning to look as though all it lacked was a paint job. Up close, though, there were numerous pits and minute crevices resulting from the hammer-welding, or forging as it is properly called. A flat Vixen body file eliminated a good many of these defects and Sam soon announced that the upper part of the top was ready for a covering of primer paint.

Since future alterations will call for a good many modifications to the body, this first primer coat is only temporary thus a quick

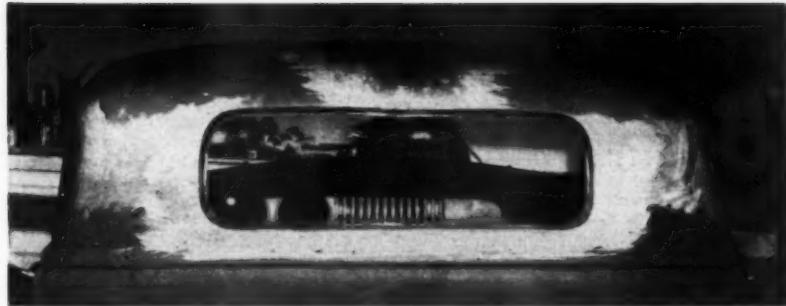
feathering of the paint completed the preparation and a light coat of primer was sprayed over the worked areas.

The reader may note in the accompanying photos, as did we, that there still remain two obvious and sizeable holes in the top. These are located just above each door, measure approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches square and include a short length of drip rail. Sam's reasoning is this: when the cab is sectioned, which is the next planned operation, the upper body may have to be narrowed slightly since the vertical door edges are not precisely parallel. The difference of almost  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch included in that section of the door which will be eliminated, could cause the top to buckle when the upper segment of the body is drawn together. If this happens, it has been determined that the buckling will occur where the edges of the top were severed for the lengthening process. Therefore, since there is little sense in having to rework a section of metal twice, the small piece of outer skin will be replaced after sectioning. The inner top structure, though, has been rejoined.

Like the edges of the top insert, the welded areas around the rear window opening were forged out and filed smooth. The minor waves and buckles that always occur during extensive metal work were worked out with an all-purpose dolly and a finishing hammer.

All of the welded seams were similarly worked out by forging and filing. Perfectionists may notice, on very close inspection, that some of the welded seams are still discernable. Tiny pits and pock marks denote the courses of the seams. Sam Gates feels that using a thin layer of lead to eliminate these defects is taboo for the simple reason that being as small as they are, the lead may not adhere properly in the pinholes while tinning the area. Putty is out also! Several coats of surfer and a good bit of concentrated block sanding will bring the finish up to perfection. No other work is necessary for the seams and the final outcome will easily pass the most rigid inspection by anyone who cares to go over the car with a fine tooth comb — and it will stay that way for years to come. No cracking out, chipping or distorting can take place for the simple reason that the finish is comprised of paint applied directly to steel instead of quick-metal, lead or putty.

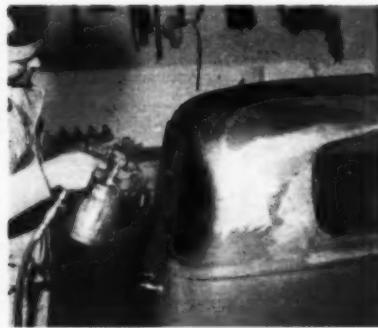
Don't forget to send in your suggestions for without them we will have no idea what you want *your* pickup to look like. If you have been considering, say, adding a new fender cut out to your custom but you are fearful as to what the result will look like, let us try it out on the pickup. If your idea is adaptable, the job will be undertaken — and followed step by step — so you will know what *your* idea looks like before going to the expense of actually doing it to your own customized automobile.



Shiny surfaces represent top sections needing rework due to the top chopping. Job took 4 days. By reducing window opening by only  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " and by widening same by 1", total glass area was only reduced 46 square inches, a negligible amount. Glass size went from 31"x 10" to 32"x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".



Feather-edger is used to clean off rough paint edge before first coat of surfacer is applied.



Temporary surfacer coat is sprayed over bare metal spots to protect them from corrosion.

The final result (right) as compared to the cab before any work was undertaken. Section of the top lacking just above door will be added after the next operation, sectioning. Text tells why. Removal of  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " from top does not greatly reduce window area or comfortable headroom on inside.



**From a tired sedan to a stormin' pickup.**

by Lynn Winsland



## CLEAN IT UP...



A second glance is sometimes needed to identify the pickup as a Chevy. '32 Ford grille shell is responsible for mistake. Twin, chromed brackets tie the fenders together. Bumper is '39 Merc.

**LOOKING** for transportation back in 1946, Tom Logan of Long Beach, Calif., came across a 1932 Chevrolet sedan. The car fit Tom's easy-going requirements, was purchased and served faithfully for several years before going into gradual retirement.

In 1950, Tom decided to convert the old Chevy to a pickup and use it for hauling trash away from home to the dump. Mechanical work was not new to him as he manages the garage for Hall's Auto Parts a few miles away from Long Beach in Norwalk. This affiliation was to save him much time and money during the conversion, a job few people would care to undertake.

Stripping the car down to the bare frame rails was the first step. The decision was made to install a '36 Chevy Master rear end with a 4.1 to 1 ratio. This was done despite the labor it entailed of cutting the frame in three sections and widening it seven inches to meet the '36 longitudinal springs. Even after this

effort the rear end would not fit until the driveshaft and housing had been shortened to meet the '48 Chevy transmission.

The original '32 front end arrangement was cleaned and rebuilt and the '32 shocks, put in good working order, were mounted in place. The brakes are hydraulics, which Chevrolet had in 1936, and are expanded by a Ford F6 truck master cylinder. Affixed to the hubs are '48 Chevy truck wheels which support 6.00 x 16's in front and 6.50 six-plys aft.

A '36 Chevy pickup body was channeled **NINE** inches over the frame until it rested on the '32 running boards and fenders. A '32 Ford grille and shell surrounds the '36 radiator, which is Chevrolet. No decent truck bed was available so Tom made his own, using  $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood for the sides, and trimmed it similar to a station wagon.

'39 Mercury bumpers were placed at each end of the shoulder-high hauler for appearance as well as protection.

## AND MAKE IT GO!



This is the view that pickup owner Tom Logan likes fellow motorists to see! Mercury bumper and Kaiser taillights were added to home-built pickup bed. Truck bed does not have a tailgate.

ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954

Driving the truck to work during the later period of construction created a show of interest by a group of fellows who themselves were engaged in the pursuit of something different. This group was the Norwalk Qualifiers, noted for their cleanly constructed and fast-moving rods. Tom was approached. Would he consider joining the club? Sure! There was but one requirement — "Ya gotta Clean It Up... And Make It Go!"

Thirty-one year old Tom was right at home in the club which is composed primarily of family men. Even his wife, Betty Jo, and his three children enjoy the outings and the get-togethers which are held from time to time.

Over a period of several years Tom has met the single requirement. A three-piece hood was formed by hand from 22 gauge sheet metal and louvered for cooling and appearance. Another club member, Bart Root, assisted with gun in hand. The paint color? — Saturn Gold Metallic.

Don Hudson, another club member and operator of Don's Trim Shop, whipped up a neat-as-a-pin interior of piped and rolled Pearl Grey Tolex with black carpeting. He also added a white tarpaulin for the bed.

Sealed beam headlights were used and '48 Kaiser taillights were set into the wood paneling at the rear of the bed. Several trips to Whittier Plating helped to achieve a truly finished and done-right appearance as well as

completing the *Clean It Up* provision of the club's requirement.

Working on the second part of the severe stipulation, Tom joined forces with Larry Weaver, a pipe line welder, and tore into the old stovebolt six with its bore and stroke of 3.750" and 3.415" respectively giving a total number of cubic inches of 200. Silvolite pistons were used and a Weber Super Track Grind was selected for the stick.

The head used on this model Chevy can stand a lot of going over and this one was not neglected. It was completely ported and polished and has had two hundred and fifty (count 'em, 250"), thousandths milled from its block side to give a compression ratio of ten-to-one! That's right, son, a quarter inch!!

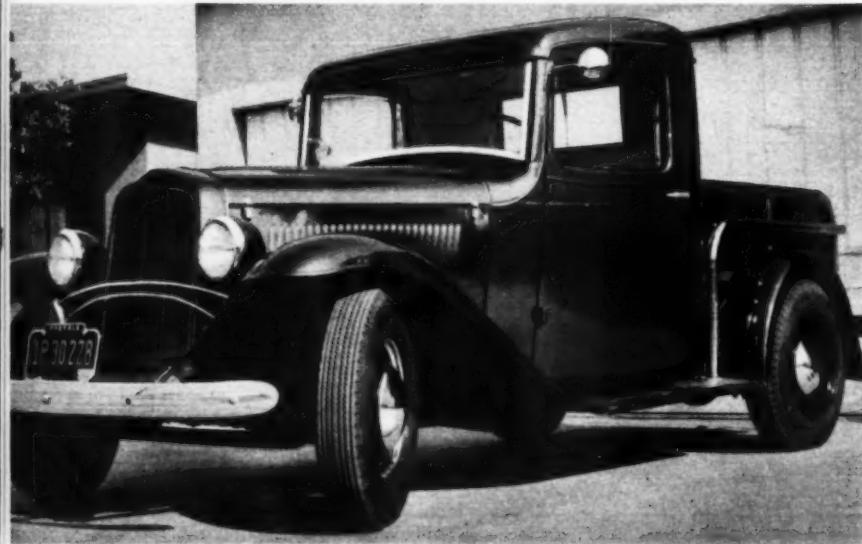
Larry fabricated the intake manifold from seamless tubing. It distributes the vapor from three Bosch downdraft jugs into the three siamese ports. The headers and complete exhaust system was also a Weaver concoction — and a neat, solid one, we might add.

Sparks fly from a reworked GMC ignition and other changes include a chopped '32 flywheel which holds a beefed-up '36 clutch.

The completed Qualifier trash truck tips the scales at a ton plus 748 and represents a total cash outlay of but \$371.

Undoubtedly this low cost figure was taken into consideration recently when Tom was voted by the Qualifiers to be their vice-president and . . . treasurer!

Amount of channeling, nine inches, is indicated by proximity of fenders to top of louvered hood. Fellow club members painted the car Saturn Gold. 16" Chevrolet truck wheels are used all around.





Interior, upholstered by photographer Hudson, boasts Pearl White leatherette and black rug with protecting white foot pads. Dash remains stock. Channeling places seat flat on floor.



Exhaust is routed up through running board and over the rear fenders since space beneath the handbuilt bed is at a minimum. Bed was built from  $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood, finished like station wagon.

Photos by Don Hudson

Owner Tom Logan fastens the hood side in place shortly before leaving for a local drag meet. Despite "expensive" look of the clean pickup truck, the total cash outlay was but \$371.00.

Three Bosch downdraft carburetors sit atop a manifold built from seamless tubing. Engine alterations include 10 to 1 compression, head polishing and porting and numerous accessories.



Photos by Spence



Beneath the deceptive exterior of this 1953 Willys sedan lurks a brand new Mercury mill. Overhead valve engine provides the lightweight car with more than adequate acceleration and speed. Owner-builder is Carroll Horton of Indiana, employed by Sports Cars Unlimited.

Appearing as innocent as the day it was built, Willys Jeep resembles countless similar cars used throughout the world as service vehicles. Resemblance ceases below hood and therein lies a tale. Motive power for the car is a mighty '50 Olds V8 coupled to a HydraMatic gear box.



**R**OD & CUSTOM's recent tour through the various Easterly and Southerly sections of the country proved conclusively that "horse trading" is here to stay. Horse trading, naturally, refers to the transplanting of an engine into a car of another make. Speed enthusiasts are gradually beginning to realize that a well tuned stock engine is considerably more reliable than one containing hundreds of dollars of special equipment and boasting long hours of expensive machining. The Willys engine, for example, is a smooth running, reliable piece of mechanism but its horsepower rating can be considered as rather low. To hop up the Willys engine one requires the acquisition of hard-to-find speed equipment as well as cylinder boring and, quite possibly, crankshaft stroking. The result of such modifications would be comparable, say, to the '54 Merc ohv engine but the Willys item would have undoubtedly become less reliable and just cantankerous in general. Therefore, one would assume that the installation of a Merc engine in a Willys would give the owner the desired performance together with the satisfaction of having a completely stock, therefore reliable, engine.

Carroll Horton, of Indianapolis, has made such a switch to answer his desire of wanting to own a really hot Willys sedan.

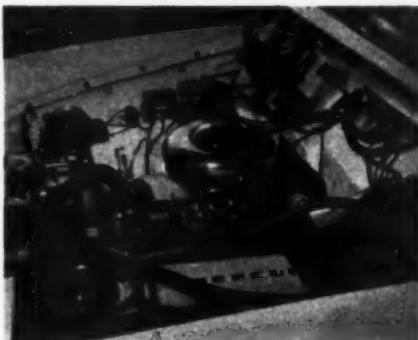
Acquiring the engine was the first major problem to be overcome since the decision to make the switch was made early in January of this year. At the time, you may remember, the Mercury was just newly introduced and the question of obtaining a complete '54 engine was good for nothing more than a discourteous laugh.

Carroll came up with the only plausible solution. He bought the engine, alright, but it was securely attached to a brand new Mercury Monterey. Within a few days of his purchase the engine was removed and the new Merc pushed out in a vacant lot to await its fate. One might think that this is a rather unusual and, we might add, an expensive way of buying a power plant. However, let it be understood that the Merc is not to remain engine-less for long. As soon as the Merc engine had been positioned in the Willys, a Chrysler V8 was lowered into the Merc.

Alterations to the Willys for the accommodation of the engine could be considered extensive if one looks upon welding and relocating a few brackets as hard work. Carroll states, though, that such labors as were necessary were more than worth the effort for the Willys goes, and handles, far beyond his greatest expectations.

Modifications to the car are as follows:

The Willys center crossmember was moved rearward  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Driveshaft shortening allowed for the use of the Merc-O-Matic transmission and the Willys rear axle ratio was changed to 3.31 to 1. The Mercury rear



1954 Mercury engine nestles snugly in Willys compartment. Radiator was moved ahead but the firewall remains unaltered. The only engine modification is the addition of dual exhausts.

## CHANGING PARTNERS

*A pair of Willys meet with a little Horse Trading*

No modifications were necessary to engine as the installation itself gave the owner power-to-weight ratio that he desired—needless to say. Service car is used primarily for aiding station's customers and pushing semi-trucks.





Looking ahead from below transmission, an added crossmember can be seen beneath oil pan center. Right side exhaust head pipe extends from above tie rod, left side extends below tie rod.

Front engine mounts were fabricated from sheet steel, secured to blocks which, in turn, were bolted to Willys front crossmember. Front of pan was reshaped for clearance around X-member.



engine mounts were altered to fit the Willys frame member. Front mounts were fabricated from a steel plate and bolted to the stock front crossmember. The Willys radiator was retained and as yet it has given no cooling troubles and none are expected in the future. The radiator, though, was relocated  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches ahead of its normal position. The firewall was unchanged, in fact its contours fit the rear of the Merc block and heads as though the two were built for each other. A late Ford steering column jacket and Ford-O-Matic selector were used in conjunction with the stock Willys steering gear. The throttle linkage is composed primarily of Mercury components.

The switch resulted in the addition of roughly 140 pounds to the Willys but the greater weight of the Merc engine is located further aft than that of the former engine. Handling, therefore, was improved considerably. The only suspension alteration was the addition of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch spacers, or shims, beneath the front coil springs.

Carroll Horton works for Indianapolis' Sports Cars Unlimited and as such runs up against unusual engine transplantings almost every day. The Merc in the Willys, though, is his favorite and will continue to be so until something better happens along.

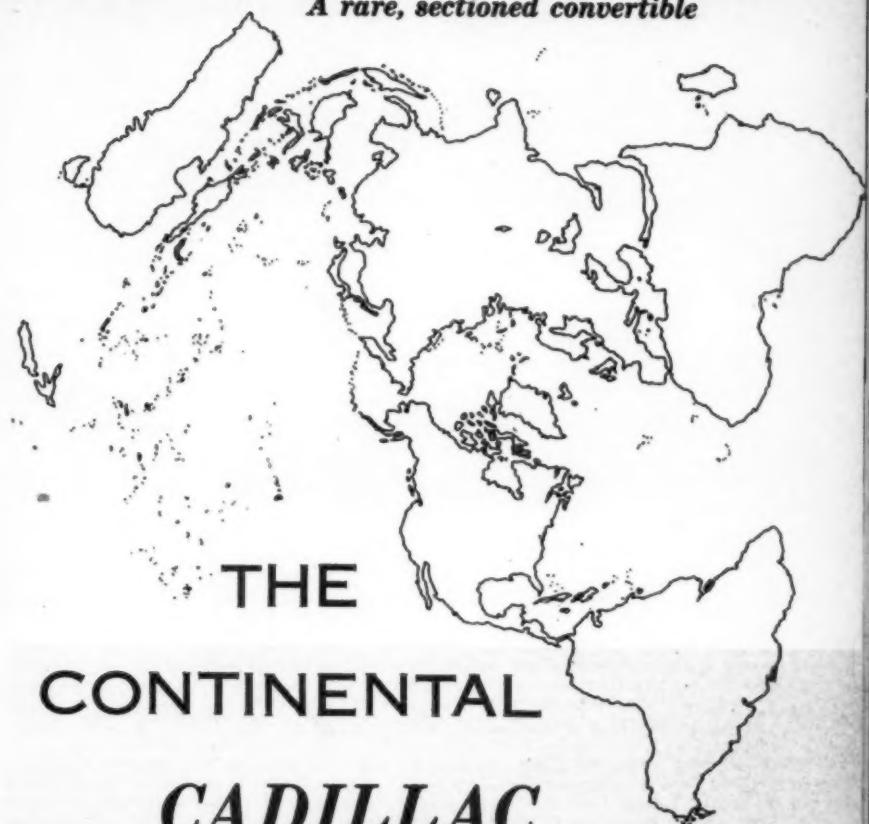
If the Merc-Willys doesn't move you, then consider an Olds-Willys. This time we have a post-war Willys jeep complete with a '50 Olds V8 mill stuffed in the limited engine compartment. Needless to say, low and second gear acceleration border on the fantastic while high gear is not to be sneezed at. The transmission for this job is a HydraMatic while the rear end and related suspension parts are standard Willys.

The jeep is the property of Frank Jones who owns and operates a combination service station and garage in Memphis, Tennessee. The jeep was originally obtained for the primary purpose of hustling its driver to assist some luckless motorist who might be stranded with a flat tire, a dead battery or with a bone-dry gas tank.

Dead-battery cars were often pushed with the little jeep but several times the vehicle came up against such things as heavy Cadillacs, Packards or Lincolns. One such experience nearly proved the undoing of the sturdy little jeep so Frank decided then and there that more power was the only answer. Thus, the Willys was mated with the Oldsmobile engine.

Performance was so far above previous hopes that the Willys can often be seen in and around the Memphis area pushing semi-stock cars off the starting line at any one of the several tracks in the region—a job that sometimes requires a shove of which only an Olds-Willys is capable.

*A rare, sectioned convertible*



THE  
CONTINENTAL  
*CADILLAC*

By Arnold Berman





Rear end detail shows stock rear fenders were positioned higher on body after sectioning. The deck lid has been smoothed and license plate mounted on bumper. The black convertible top operates as it did before sectioning job was undertaken. The car is positively not for sale!

THE NEW Mark VII Jaguar honked the 1941 Cadillac to the curb. Mr. Jag owner unwrapped himself from the front seat and leaned all the way down on the door of the white Cadillac.

"You've got a fine car here," he said to Alan Fordney, the driver of the Cadillac.

"Well, thanks," grinned Alan.

"Want to sell it?" asked the Jag enthusiast.

"No," replied Alan, "I have too much fun with it." A look of keen disappointment crossed the Jaguar owner's face.

Alan was naturally complimented by all of this attention but didn't wish to hurt the other's feelings by a flat turning down of his generous offer.

"Look," Alan said finally, "I guess if you drive your Jaguar to where they're rare it introduces you to all sorts of interesting people, right?"

The Jag man nodded.

"Well, I feel the same way about my car," continued Alan. "Only being more rare than

the Jaguar I meet even more interesting people. I don't know, maybe I'm just used to it because of its roadability and the fact it's a one-of-a-kind. Thanks for your interest."

Though not always eliciting offers of buying, Alan Fordney's tastefully-customized Cadillac does draw attention wherever it is driven. Looking at ease either in the Malibu, California, film colony where Alan lives or in front of the Monarch Die Casting Corporation which Alan heads, the car stands out from all others like Cellini silver in a dime store.

One of the reasons for this is that there is no evidence of the hashed or hambugered look common to too many customized automobiles. Dean Fellows Mix, of Rochester, New York, did the body work in August of 1949 - a piece of workmanship which should help still the argument that Southern California is the only place where custom body building is properly done.

The car looks low. It is low, only 40 inches from ground to hood, the appearance being

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accentuated by the method of construction. The body was not channeled but was sectioned out all the way around, a strip of body metal approximately 8 inches in width being removed and the two halves of the body then being welded together again. The custom builder must have said to himself, "Let's not just add some car's fender here and some other's deck lid there, let's design this car, not throw it together."

Therefore even though the doors measure but 28½ inches from top to bottom, the original '41 Cadillac front and rear seating space has been retained and the capacity of the rear deck for carrying luggage remains almost as it was before restyling.

The interior of Alan Fordney's Cadillac has a fine saddle-shop appearance. Genuine top grain cowhide covers all the seats and the door panels. Even the dash is finished in rich brown leather.

Little has been done to the engine to make it a racing powerplant. The heads have been milled slightly and a Crawford dual point distributor plate installed. There is no ping heard on sudden acceleration when using premium gasoline. With its HydraMatic transmission, the car accelerates from zero to 60 in 17 seconds — no Indianapolis time, certainly — but good enough for the general run of traffic situations. In average usage the car delivers just under 14 miles to the gallon. Mileage could be increased if the 8.20 x 15" tires were exchanged for some of 16" size.

A good indication of what Alan was searching for in a car can be gotten from his specifications for the muffler — made to order by Walter Storer in Stockton, Calif. Fordney wanted a straight through type of muffler with its inherent lower back pressure yet he insisted that it be as quiet as possible, for he has a rare but admirable dislike for the numberless drivers on the road whose cars sound like a field of Offenhauers in the far north turn, but perform somewhat less than the noise they make. Alan is trying to con no one into thinking his automobile is a racing car — "Let the others fool themselves if they want to about noise equalling performance," he says, "I like a car that whispers."

Since the car was bought back in November of 1949, Alan has driven it several times deep into Mexico over a variety of roads ranging from paved highways to rutted dirt paths. Perhaps due to its 3000 pound weight and its tubular aircraft-type shock absorbers the quality of the ride has always been smooth and even — the low center of gravity contributing greatly towards excellent roadability. And the Mexicans were just as fascinated by the car's appearance as the inhabitants to the north, wondering when it would be that they would see another car like it. This could take a long, long time.



A first glance would give an indication that this is a standard '41 Cadillac. However, note proximity of dash to floor. Interior is done in genuine top grain cowhide. Tarpaulin keeps Santa Monica sun from striking rear seat when it is not in use. The top height is original.



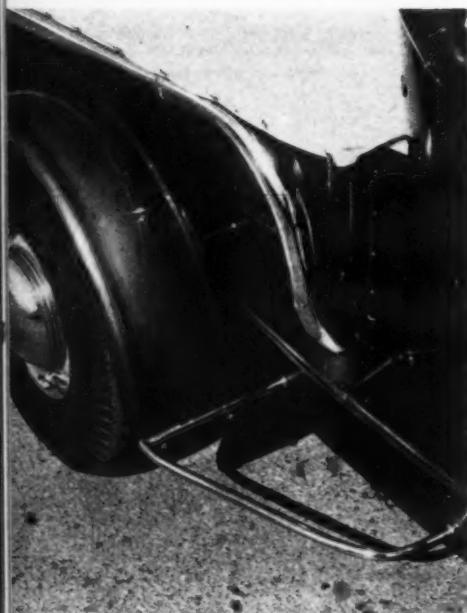
One of the reasons it is called The Continental Cadillac is apparent in this photo. People are often wrongly identifying the car as a Lincoln. Sectioning job was carried out around base of the hood. The carburetor now extends into scoop provided. The grille is original but has been moderately reworked to conform to new design.

Rear fender fins, obvious in the accompanying photo, are but one of the touches intended to bring the thirteen year old car up to modern standards. Fenders are frenched to the body.



*When the time to compile the material for this regular column rolls around each month, we find ourselves faced with a serious problem. Our photographic files contain so many shots of almost numberless appearance-adding details that we find it difficult to decide just which ones to use. Glancing over the daily correspondence helps us solve this dilemma for our readers are continually asking to be shown specific ways of overcoming specific problems. Here, then, are this month's suggestions — aimed directly at all you hop up fans.*

## **THOSE LITTLE THINGS THAT ADD SO MUCH**



**for show as well as go!**

If there's anything that plagues rod builders, it's the prevalent question of tailpipes and their location. To those interested primarily in performance rather than looks, a couple of outlets extending from beneath the rear of the body generally suffices, but there are those who believe that appearance should be foremost and it is important that they dream up a new twist for their tailpipes. (Joke intended.) As a suggestion, here we see a T bodied pickup truck with pipes protruding from the lower body panel and turning rearward to run the length of the bed, just below the upper edge. Silencing is accomplished by a pair of mufflers located immediately beneath the cockpit. With the pipes being thus positioned outside the body, the builder automatically eliminated the age old difficulty of having to arch the pipes up and over the rear axle. The outstanding chrome plated pipes serve to add length to the car.

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Nearly every roadster or coupe builder comes up against the problem of how to mount the shocks and the headlights. If one ends up with too many brackets and braces crowded onto the limited confines of the frame horns the result is a conglomeration of parts that do nothing whatsoever to add to the car's finished appearance. The builder of the car shown here ran headlong into the foregoing situation and after a lot of careful deliberation came up with this solution. He has combined his shock and light bracket into one unit neatly held to the frame by two bolts. Notice that the bracket itself was made from a length of heavy strap iron which has been heated while in a vise and twisted so the upper portion is now ninety degrees to the lower half. This gave a single, flat piece of metal with the advantage of two right angle surfaces for mounting. A tab was welded to the light bar which supports the assembly from the same bolt as the shock.



There are so many classes of competition cars at the popular drag meets that one has a wide selection of body and engine types from which to choose when he decides to enter the line-up. Records stand high in all classes for competition is becoming increasingly keen. Even street coupes, with their compliment of fenders and other equipment necessary to make their use on the streets legal, have boasted records high above those of a year or so ago. One problem confronting those running full-fendered cars is how to cut down wind resistance. Another often overlooked fact is that wind sweeping past the rear wheels builds up under the aft surfaces of the fenders. Theoretically, speed could be gained by providing the trapped air with a means of escape from its confines. The owner of the coupe shown here has neatly cut elongated slots in his rear fenders to help him in gaining that very necessary 1 or 2 miles an hour.

Many are the competition cars that have been built for show as well as go. Such cars need the advantages of appearance-adding details so the builder must make the functional accessories of his car as neat as possible. Bumpers are not a necessity on a car used for draggin' exclusively though it is well to protect the rear of the body to prevent damage from the inevitably high-bumpers of push-cars. Most cars are not equipped with a starter or have so much compression that a starter is useless, require unsightly pushbars welded between the bumper brackets. These bars are often heavier than necessary and, since weight is all-important, it is to the builder's advantage to make the bar as light, yet strong, as possible. The neat push bars on this car were made from lengths of bar stock, heated and bent to shape, then secured to the car through extensions which, in turn, are bolted securely to the rear frame horns.



# CUSTOM

## TIPS

Don't know what we've done to deserve it but the mail man has been complaining that his daily loads to our offices are continually getting heavier. We can't very well ask you to cease writing for it's only through your letters that we know just what it is you want to see in R & C. A good percentage of the mail is addressed to the Technical Tips department, though a good portion of these ask questions regarding various phases of customizing. The only way, then, to evenly distribute the load is to break up questions regarding engine and chassis modifications and those concerning body alterations. Thus, here is the first in a new series of columns devoted exclusively to the custom fan. Address your correspondence to Custom Tips Dept., and send it to R & C at 4949 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 27, Calif.

### BUMPERGUARD TAILLIGHTS

During the course of leafing through past issues of your fine magazine I have found that many of the Customs you have featured have been equipped with bumperguard taillights. I am planning to relocate the taillights of my '48 Chevy and would like to know where I can obtain a set of guards with the lights already built in.

Mark Lashorn

Hanlin, Pa.

• Have seen sets of said lights set into universal guards on sale in various auto stores. However, the name of the manufacturer escapes me and not having seen similar lights for over a year and a half I would say that they are no longer in production. Lights are quite easily set into guards by constructing a light tight box to retain the bulb units and fitting it to the reverse side of the guard by welding or brazing. The lenses can be made from red plastic but be sure and scribe lines on the inner side of the lenses to diffuse the light and make it become, as it is known, reflectorized.

### TAILLIGHT HOLES FOR EXHAUST

I am working on my first car and as soon as I began my customizing, I found I had run up against a problem — and here I thought restyling was going to be easy! I

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want to run my exhaust pipes through the taillight holes and put smaller lights down on the bumper. However, in order to extend the pipes through the existing holes I find that one pipe must run extremely close to the gas fill pipe. Is there a chance that the heat from the pipe will cause any trouble in the fuel department? I'd hate to blow myself up. Will asbestos help the situation?

Jimmy Hackett      New Haven, Conn.

\* There are several ways of getting around your problem of routing the exhaust extension near the gas fill pipe, Jimmy. However, since you are evidently trying to economize by using the existing holes in the fender, I won't suggest relocating the fill pipe or extending the pipes elsewhere through the fender and filling the holes left by the removal of the stock taillights. The extreme tips of exhaust extensions do not get dangerously hot since they are quite a distance from the engine and the gases have a chance to become reasonably cool before exiting. Asbestos wrapped around both the exhaust pipe and around the fill pipe will eliminate all problems if the job is properly done.

#### TIRE CLEARANCE

All of the fine channeled coupes that you have featured in your magazine during the past year have had adequate clearance between the rear tires and the body. I have a '32 Ford coupe with a five-inch stepped-frame and it is channeled the width of the frame. The rear tires miss the body by only  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch. I know that reversing the wheels on their centers will help but I do not feel that this alone will give me the clearance I need. Will you please tip me off on how the boys get so much clearance?

Jim Coyle      Neenah, Wis.

\* Your five inch frame-step plus the channel job adds up to approximately a 9 inch body drop. This is quite severe and don't recall seeing a car so radically dropped in R & C. In addition to reversing the wheels, I would suggest raising the wheel wells (and the fenders if you have them) as much as possible. This is the only way of gaining tire-well clearance with your car.

#### FILLED HOOD UNLATCHING PROBLEM

I have removed the combination hood handle and ornament from the front of my '37 Ford. Problem: how to open the hood from inside the car?

Bob Lamphier      St. Martin, Ohio

\* The '41 through '48 Chevrolet hood latches are quite easily adaptable to '37 Fords. The job will require the use of both the upper and lower lock assemblies as well as the flexible pull cable.

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#### PONTIAC HOOD

I have a '49 Pontiac club coupe I want to rework but I can't do a thing until I get rid of the wide "silver streak" down the center of the hood. Filling this hood would be too expensive so would like to know if any other GM hood will fit this car.

W. Fox      New York City, N.Y.

\* Sorry, Pontiac hoods are not interchangeable with any other GM product.

#### RAILS

I am building a roadster using a '23 T body. What frame would you suggest using?

Wm. Coty      Pittsfield, Mass.

\* Model A frame rails are reasonably easy to work with. However, most of them have been subjected to thousands upon thousands of hard miles and are at the point of age now where they are beginning to break up. Suggest closely examining an A frame for any marked defects, then boxing each rail by adding a fourth side to the existing C shape.

#### HUDSON GRILLE

I have a '50 Hudson club coupe that I would like to customize. What changes can I make in the grille? I'd like to use a Mercury grille if possible, about a '50 model.

Stuart Jackson      Lapaz, Indiana

\* Sorry, as we stated earlier we cannot suggest specific modifications for our taste may be different than yours. The Mercury switch, though, would be possible. Mercury grille shells and the grille itself can be modified to fit nearly any late model American car.

#### SOLENOID DOORS

How much would it cost to install solenoids in the doors of my '51 Mercury?

James Rubottom      San Pedro, Calif.

\* Many factors are involved in converting doors to solenoids operation. Roughly speaking, solenoids can be purchased from a wrecking yard for about \$3.00 each. The necessary wire, cable, pulleys and push buttons (one for interior and one for exterior) for each door would probably set you back another \$4.00. If you made the installation yourself, there would not be any labor charges involved but a body shop would probably charge you in the neighborhood of \$10.00 to fill the handle hole and repaint the door. That would give you a total of close to \$17.00 per door at the very cheapest.

Incidentally, R & C is working on an entirely new method of opening doors without handles, buttons or latches of any sort. As soon as the radical method has been proven, its installation will be completely described in a future issue.

# our reader's customs . . .



MILWAUKEE MERCURY

Customs appeal to us here in Wisconsin more than rods due to our adverse weather. However, we enjoy reading about both types of cars in your magazine.

I've put approximately one year of work into my '49 Merc convertible as I hope, the enclosed photo shows. I did all of the work myself except for the top and the upholstery. I eliminated the unsightly hump from the top by taking two inches out of the center bow. The top still operates as it should.

All of the exterior trim has been eliminated, including the door and trunk handles, the side rub strip, etc. The upper part of the grille shell was welded to the hood so that the hood now curves under and the horizontal seam formerly separating the two exists no longer. The headlights have been frenched using '52 Ford rims and the grille is a re-worked Henry J. The doors open through the use of an electric solenoid arrangement and the trunk has an electric lift. The inner buttons are located in the arm rests which makes it convenient for opening the doors.

When all of the metal work was completed I sprayed 8 coats of Royal Marine lacquer over the car. At present, the engine is stock. Robert Zainer Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## CONSERVATIVE CADILLAC

In case some of your readers are bored with custom Mercs, Fords and Chevys, I am sending a photo of my car which, I believe, will prove to be something a little different.



58

It is a '41 Cadillac. The hood, deck and fenders have been dechromed and the grille is from a '46 Cad. The car has been lowered 2" all around. What chrome there is on the car is brand new. The paint is Strata Blue enamel. The engine has dual exhausts.

Blaine Rockhold Philadelphia, Pa.

• *It's funny how things always turn up in groups. Here we've gone along for several months without a Cadillac then suddenly two of them turn up. You might be interested in the other custom Cadillac elsewhere in this issue.*

## ROD'S BEGINNING

I happened to glance through one of my brother's copies of R & C (July, '53) and noticed an article entitled "Return Of A Rod". The story dealt with a '32 Chevy roadster.



Since I am restoring a '31 A Ford roadster, I am well aware of the work involved in bringing an older car like this up to mint condition. Your photo of the car showing it when it was taken from the junkyard reminded me of a photo I took of my car in about the same state of disrepair. Apparently someone had started to make a rod out of it then given up. It was minus the engine and transmission when I bought it but the photo shows that the hood and fenders were neatly piled beside the car in the junkyard.

I am going to leave the car strictly stock, but even so, I have a job cut out for me as anyone familiar with this sort of work can plainly see.

The young lady in the photo inspecting the car is my wife. She said, "You mean to say you bought this?"

Russell Gerrits Chicago, Illinois  
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## EDITORIAL

(Continued from Page 5)

appears beginning on page 28. The second such item settled itself on page 48, also in this issue.

The return trip of our little jaunt was done by car — a road test of the '54 Oldsmobile 98 for the June issue of our companion magazine, MOTOR LIFE.

As you may, or may not, remember, R & C took a similar trip last year and for the same reason. As a result several following Editorials were devoted to comments on Eastern and Mid-Western activities and to remarks about highway and road conditions in general. Once again we found that standardization of highway marking signs was lacking. Some states mark their highways but leave it up to the driver to find his way through a city or town while a neighboring state will provide an overabundance of directions in their populated areas but not even so much as a mile post through the country.

A good many of you are probably familiar with a sign that reads something like this: CITY LIMITS — 25 MILES PER HOUR — POLICE PATROLLED. Unfortunately too many of the small villages, whose boundaries are indicated by the warning above, realize a good part of their treasury receipts from unsuspecting motorists who, having driven at a high rate of speed through the country, find themselves stopped by the strong arm of the law for exceeding the legal speed limit by two or three miles an hour.

One such town deep in the Cumberland Mountain area of Tennessee has the answer for slowing down motorists who think they are going 25 mph when they are actually moving at 40 or 50 mph. A steel pressure plate was set into the roadway opposite a sign similar to the one above. The plate was connected electrically to a stop signal several hundred yards down the road. A timer was incorporated into the system which changed the signal lights from one color to the other after a predetermined length of time. As soon as a car passed over the plate the signal winked to red. Should the car be traveling in excess of the indicated speed the light will still be red when the signal is reached and the car will be forced to stop. However, a car traveling at 25 mph or less will have a green light by the time it reaches the lights and it can proceed. This is a wonderful idea and other small towns would do well to follow suit before the townsfolk are scared out of their wits by fast driving motorists.

All in all our hurried journey proved that Customizing and Rodding are progressing quite nicely in the South while the Mid-West has equalled, or surpassed, California's former status as the car building capital of the modifying world.

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## variety mart

Nowhere else can you get action like you can in ROD & CUSTOM. For only a dollar you can offer anything for sale or to be sold. Letters from former advertisers in this section continue to come in stating that never before have they gotten such quick action. Many items are bought and sold within two or three days after an issue goes on sale. Why don't you take advantage of this great offer? Just state, in 25 words or less, what it is you want to buy or sell. Then drop your ad, together with a dollar bill, into an envelope and send it to this column in care of ROD & CUSTOM, 4949 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 27, Calif.

**WANTED!** Model A or B Ford roadster or touring car in running condition. Philadelphia area. D. M. Dykhouse, 262 Copley Road, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania.

**GLASSPAR** sports car built by Clay Smith's shop. '53 Cadillac with Magspark, Potvin cam, Dual Quad manifold. Car featured in several magazines. R. Swan, 5659 Stockton Blvd., Sacramento, Calif.

**SELL!** Channeled '32 roadster. Chrome front end, full race 3 5/16" x 4" Merc. Zephyr gears, 3.78 rear end. Custom upholstery and top. Photos and price on request. Keith Troutwine, 306 North Main, Arcanum, Ohio.

(Continued on Page 66)

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# What\$it?

SOME TIME ago we had an insatiable desire to find, and eventually restore, an antique truck. We tracked down lead after lead for over a year before finding that which is pictured herewith. It was discovered behind a barn in an Eastern state and the problem immediately arose as to how to get it to California. The question needed no solution, though, for the owner decided he wouldn't part with the relic for less than an even trade on a new Mercury.

What was it we uncovered? Is it a Ford or a Maxwell? How about an electric? (With that crank protruding from beneath the radiator? Don't be silly.) Do you know? This comprises our What\$it for this month and if you have an idea of what the make is, drop us a card and if you're one of the five lucky winners you will receive a one year subscription to R & C. Present subscribers will automatically receive a 12 month extension. Here are the few basic rules concerning this monthly query:

Your answer may be sent by either card or letter but be sure that your name and address is legible and "What\$it?" appears on the face.

**DO NOT** include your answer in correspondence addressed to the other columns in R & C.

The names and address of the five winners will be given THREE MONTHS after the date indicated upon the cover of this issue. (The winners of this month's contest will appear in Sept. issue). Deadline for answers is



ONE MONTH after the cover date. (June deadline is July 1st.)

Don't feel that you haven't a chance to win. Get out a pencil and paper and send your answer to ROD & CUSTOM, 4949 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 27, Calif.

## MARCH WINNERS

Our "What\$it?" for March was a narrow little car with a touring car body. Did you guess it to be a Twombley? If you did, you were... wrong! The car is a Woods Mobilette. Few were manufactured and of those that were, only four are known to exist today. Space does not permit a further rundown on this unusual car so without further ado here are the five winners, each of which will receive a years subscription to R & C.

Robert M. Thayer, Rockford, Illinois. Pfc. Francis J. Bester, Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey. William Niels, Pomfret, Connecticut. Joe McWillard, Los Angeles, Calif. Bob Maurer, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Congratulations, fellas, and we hope you enjoy your 12 month subscription beginning with this the June issue.



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### AUGUST, 1953

Custom Ford four feet high. Installing electric window lifts. Explaining carburetion and ignition. A Rod and a Custom from Washington. Maximum acceleration explained.

### OCTOBER, 1953

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### APRIL, 1954

Complete review of R & C's first year. Chevy custom convertible. Explaining dual carburetion trouble-spots. Installing Hi-Lift rocker arms on a Chevrolet. Three beautiful street roadsters.

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# TECHNICAL TIPS

## BORED '40

I recently bought a '32 coupe with a '40 engine in it. I would like to know how far this block can be bored without running into trouble. Can I go to 3 5/16"?

I would also like to ask how many carburetors I should use. Will three jugs put in too much fuel?

Roger Worley

Boise, Idaho

- Don't go to 3 5/16", Rog, or you'll be spouting water. Don't go over Merc, or 3 3/16", if you want to stay out of trouble.

How many carburetors you want to use is entirely up to you, and the availability and price of various manifolds in your neighborhood. As for the amount of gas supplied by a multiple carburetor set up, the engine requires only as much fuel as it can use. Therefore, three or thirty carburetors would make little difference in your engine's fuel consumption.

Tech Ed.

## HEAT RISERS

I have a '47 Mercury engine and I would like to know whether blocking my heat risers would cause any damage to the engine? Would it increase horsepower as well as mileage? If I get approximately 13 miles to the gallon now what mileage can I expect after blocking the risers?

R. Coel

San Francisco, Calif.

- Don't go to the trouble of blocking your heat risers. Your horsepower could conceivably be increased but by so little that the effect would be hardly noticeable. Your mileage would drop considerably, and in addition you would reduce your throttle response and the engine would be sluggish when it is cold.

Tech Ed.

## THIN HEAD GASKETS

My father and I are having an argument. I want to add thin head gaskets to my '47 Ford to add to the power. My father says that it is unwise to monkey with factory engineering. Would you set us straight on the matter?

Don Davenport

Freeport, Ill.

- Thinner head gaskets than were supplied with your engine would raise the compression which, in turn, will give you added power. However, you had better check your piston-head clearance to be sure. Some Ford engines have less clearance than others due to manufacturing conditions.

Tech Ed.

## ROD PROBLEMS

I am planning on building a roadster and would like to get a few things straight.

1. Will a '52 Mercury engine fit a '32 Ford transmission as far as the bell housing is concerned?

2. What is the most practical way of lowering a '32 roadster and will I have to raise the fenders?

3. What type of backing plates must I use to adapt hydraulic brakes to the '32 hubs?

Norm Tibley Tecumseh, Ont., Canada

• 1. Adapters are available from your Ford dealer for uniting the '52 engine to the early transmission. The same adapter was used on all '49 and '50 Mercurys. You will have to use an early model pilot bushing.

2. The most practical way of lowering your roadster depends on how far you want to drop it. Channeling detracts from leg room but serves to hide the frame from view. Z-ing the frame raises the rear frame extensions and the spring crossmember. Kicking up the frame serves to shorten the frame so it would be necessary to move the rear crossmember further aft. Longer shackles will cause sway unless a swaybar is added. The amount of drop will also determine whether or not you have to raise the fenders. As for a suggestion, Norm, I'd kick up the frame.

3. Any Ford hydraulic brake backing plates from 1939 through 1948 will fit your '32 hubs but you will have to add spacers between the shoulders of the hubs and the plates.

Tech Ed.

## BUICK LIFTERS

I am thinking of installing solid valve lifters on my '41 Buick Special. I would like to know if this modification would help my acceleration and low speed performance. The car is driven mostly in town.

John Alfery Sierra Madre, Calif.

• Solid lifters will do nothing whatsoever for your Buick as far as performance is concerned.

Tech Ed.

## PASSES ON A TIP

Ever since R & C first appeared on the stands I have been meaning to write to you and congratulate your staff on a fine publication. After reading Salt Flats History in the Dec. '53 issue, I had to throw on the binders and write! Although I am no English

ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954

expert I have to say that the story was very well written and the choice of words just goes to show that a small magazine can have a very good backbone. This is the first time, as I recall it, that any of the auto magazines has given such an interesting account of the Flats. It's really good reading!

By the time you get this I hope to have my '49 Hillman Minx on the road. I have made a few changes in it, such as: a '50 Ford engine that will remain stock until I see how the chassis is going to handle it, a '33 Willys rear end, a '34 Ford transmission and an early Ford radiator. We have used '50 Ford instruments and at present are on the lookout for a suitable gas tank since our friends across the pond installed a "can" that holds only 7 gallons. Now that the project is completed I can say that it was easy. The biggest problem was the clutch disengagement. Now let me pass on a tip to all who might be interested. If you are considering stuffing a Ford V8 into a Hillman, take a look at the White Tip Cab truck. Their hydraulic clutch is the answer — and at a very reasonable price.

Joseph Huggett Philadelphia, Pa.

**• Many thanks for the nice things you said, Joe. By the way, hydraulic clutch mechanisms were covered quite thoroughly in our March '54 issue.**

Tech Ed.

#### HOT WILLYS

I am planning on buying a '48 civilian Jeep. If I do, I would like to rework the engine but haven't been able to find any speed equipment for the engine. Is anything available?

Thanks for the fine little magazine, it's very popular here in Texas.

David McMath Ft. Worth, Texas

**• A head and a manifold are available for the Willys, manufactured under the name of Hickey. If your dealer can't supply you, then write to Bell Auto Parts at 3633 E. Gage Ave., Bell, California.**

Incidentally, if you'd like to make a complete engine switch then take a look at page 48 of this issue.

Tech Ed.

#### HI-LIFTS FOR NASH?

I have just finished your March issue and I must say that the World's Smallest V8 story was the greatest!

Being but a backyard mechanic I need some advice before I tear into my '48 Nash Ambassador. Are there any Hi-Lift rocker arms available for this engine similar to those used on Chevy's?

C. C. Elliot Kansas City, Kansas

**• Sorry, as far as we are able to determine no one manufactures Hi-Lift rocker arms for the Nash engine.**

Tech Ed.

ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954



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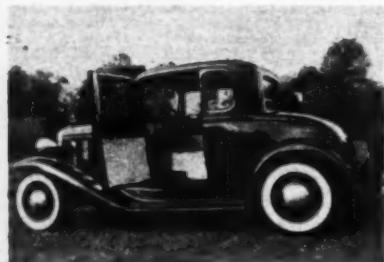
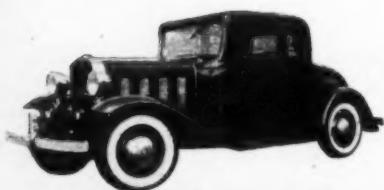
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## READER'S CAR OF THE MONTH



FROM AMONG the photos sent to the Readers Customs column each month, once again we have selected one as being outstanding and as such it automatically becomes our Reader's Car of the Month.

This little '32 Chevrolet coupe is the proud possession of Frank Giandomenico who lives in Franklin, Massachusetts. Frank, 19 years of age, used to work in his father's service station where he necessarily picked up a sizeable automotive background. When he decided to build up a car his friends suggested that he use the popular '32 Ford as a basis for his project. Frank, though, didn't agree and set out to prove that the '32 Chevrolet is every bit as practical, and good looking, as its competitor.

A bit of searching turned up the car he wanted in fairly reasonable condition, and Frank took it home and turned to the project at hand. Four months later his coupe was completed and since then it has more than lived up to his expectations.

Frank's love for Chevrolets, however, ceases beneath the hood of these fine cars so he substituted a '46 Ford truck block. Modifications are slight, dual exhausts, twin carburetors and milled heads give the coupe more than enough punch when the throttle is pushed to the floor.

The engine is coupled to a '39 Ford transmission which, in turn, connects to a '32 Ford rear end assembly. Airplane-type shocks are used at all four wheels.

Frank ripped out the original upholstery and replaced it with red and cream leatherette. The dash, too, was reworked to receive a full compliment of Stewart Warner instruments and an array of toggle switches to operate such things as the head and taillights, the dash lights, etc.

The finished project boasts a metallic maroon paint job, weighs in at 2490 lbs., and required a total cash outlay of \$550.00 R & C feels that Frank Giandomenico has proven that the '32 Chevy is a good starting point for Rod builders and that a fine looking piece of machinery can result from a limited amount of money spent for parts and necessary alterations.

Who will be the owner of our next Reader's Car of the Month? It could be you. Send us a selection of photos of your car and a complete list of alterations or modifications. Include a little of your background, how you became interested in cars, how long your project took and other pertinent information.

Send it along to us, in care of Reader's Customs, and if your car is particularly outstanding then you will have a full page devoted to your car and, in addition, you will receive a years subscription to ROD & CUSTOM as did the owner of the car described above.

**E**VER SINCE Texan John Males' letter appeared in the Correspondence column of the January issue, we have been besieged with letters from all parts of the country, and from Canada too, asking that Mr. Males either change his tune or offer a photo of his car. Mr. Males, it seems, takes a rather dim view of anything that would fall into the custom category — but as for Rods, they're the most!

Last month we reprinted some of the letters received regarding John Males' notions. Most of them suggested dire thoughts though there were a few that agreed 100% with Males.

We promised that we would have a few words for you from John and, if possible, a photo of his car. Though doubts began to cross our minds as day after day passed with no mail from Texas, we were relieved to see, just before press date, that he had not failed us. So, without further ado, here is John Males' letter, exactly as received with no alterations or deletions whatsoever.

To whom it may concern:

I have been asked to write this open letter to you who are not in accord with my tastes as to "Kustoms".

First, I'm neither an idiot nor a moron. I have average intelligence and my physical and mental conditions are average.

Second, I DO NOT LIKE "KUSTOMS". They are a poor excuse for a passenger car. I have seen a good many of these upside-down soap dishes both on the road and in body shops. Most were "pretty" in a cheap way with their tails dragging the ground and with their grilles looking much like the face of "The Beast From 20 Thousand Fathoms"—teeth and all. None of them could get out of their own tracks. As for the unearthly colors they were painted — well, I've seen more pleasing paint tones on my little nephews' drawings than he brings home from kindergarten.

Third, I DO LIKE RODS! My first experience with one was back in '41 when I helped a friend build a car that turned 110 mph on the dry lakes in California. You see, I was raised in that Western state. Since then I've had plenty of experience with these so-called "buckets of bolts". Enclosed is a recent shot of a car I am now building which I sent in response to the request of R & C's editors.

The car, you will note, is a coupe — though I actually prefer a roadster; we have severe rains here in Texas that makes it necessary to have a top if the car is to be driven the year around — which mine is. I favor the T body over anything else so picked up a choice '26 as a starting point on this car. It sits on a pair of boxed A rails which were inserted through the cowl. In this manner I was able to retain the stock floor braces for body strength. The channeling amounts to a shade over seven inches. I wanted the coupe to have as little overall height as possible but didn't

# JOHN MALES

(Continued from last month)



wish to chop the top (I was afraid it might give the car a custom look) so I sectioned four inches from the lower part of the body. From ground to roof the car stands approximately four feet high. Leg room is more than sufficient since the floor has been dropped below the frame rails.

Motive power is provided by a '50 Olds V8 with Hydramatic drive. The running gear is entirely Ford.

So, this is my car and I will put it beside a custom any day in the year. The car gives trouble-free transportation, its performance is startling, it handles like a foreign car and, though the body is almost thirty years old, its overall appearance is one of modern taste though with purely functional lines.

Take one of those "dream-boat-customs" (dreamed up while in a stupor, no doubt) and a nice clean Rod and match their points. Depending on who is judging, the Rod will win on almost every point. (Of course a high calibre ape may be swayed to choose the custom for its front end may resemble the ape's Uncle Herman.)

A properly assembled Rod is not only a thing of pleasure to drive but it's dependable, proven by the fact that many are driven in road races both here and on the Coast. How

(Continued on next page)

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**VARIETY MART (Continued from Page 59)**

**TRADE!** Roadster described above displayed in many shows. Featured HOP UP, December '52. Trade for fendered, 3-window '32 coupe. Engine not important. Keith Troutwine, 306 North Main, Arcanum, Ohio.

**SELL OR SWAP.** Ford B engine, transmission, downdraft, header, milled head, rough condition. Need '32 dropped axle and/or cash. Sell complete '32 chassis right price. Dale R. Owens, 617 East Grundy Street, Tullahoma, Tennessee.

**FOR SALE.** 1936 Ford convertible sedan. New top, white walls, hydraulics, column shift, DeSoto bumpers, Lincoln taillights, good engine. Will trade for roadster or phaeton. V. Strand, Iroquois, Illinois.

**FOR SALE.** 1939 Ford convertible sedan. Good top, tires and body, new covers. No rust or dents, really sharp. Will trade for roadster or phaeton. V. Strand, Iroquois, Illinois.

**FOR SALE.** 1930 Ford A coupe. Like new. No rust or dents, original engine and equipment. *Thirty thousand original miles.* Will trade for roadster or phaeton. V. Strand, Iroquois, Ill.

**LOOK.** R & C needs a name for its custom pickup. Also need grille and other general styling ideas. See TOP CHOPPING in this issue. Send suggestions to ROD & CUSTOM, 4949 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 27, Calif.

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**JOHN MALES**

(Continued from Page 65)

many of you rabid custom fiends have seen a Kalifornia Lead Sled in a race — moreover ever win one?

These, then, are my sentiments. I now leave you poor custom boys, with your bumper casters and lowering blocks, to help each other up and down the driveways — apparently you're too proud to use a derrick.

John Males

Fort Worth, Texas

There you are, readers, Mr. Males has had his say. Don't exactly know how all of this got started but, as at the outset, we still remain neutral in this hassle. We will be glad to print whatever views you might like to give on this subject providing, of course, censorship is not necessary.

ROD AND CUSTOM, June, 1954

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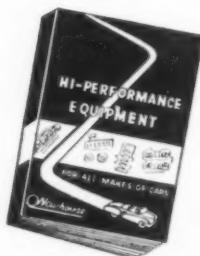
# Important Announcement

To Readers of *ROD & CUSTOM Magazine*

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